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WORKS

ON

EPISCOPACY.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING THE

FIRST SERIES OF DR. BOWDEN'S LETTERS TO DR. MILLER:

WITH A PREFACE,

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND BENJAMIN T. ONDERDONK, D. D.

NEW-YORK:

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PRESS.

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THE

APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF EPISCOPACY

ASSERTED.

In a Series of Letters,

ADDRESSED TO THE REV. DR. MILLER, ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

A. D. 1808.

BY THE REV. JOHN BOWDEN, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY, LOGIC, AND BELLES LETTRES, IN COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.

4-20-32 Gift

G. Duffield
Detroit

PREFACE.

This republication of the works of Drs. Bowden and Cooke, was suggested by the appearance of a new edition of the Rev. Dr. Miller's "Letters concerning the Constitution and Order of the Christian Ministry," which had occasioned the strictures of the above-named authors. To this new edition, Dr. M. prefixed a "Preliminary Letter," which, although containing nearly fifty octavo pages, throws no other new light on his argument than such as may flow from an effort to enlist in its favour the passions and prejudices, rather than the sober conviction of the understandings, of his readers. On some of the assertions, denunciations, and sophisms, with which the "Preliminary Letter" abounds, it may be proper here to say a few words.

The present writer has no recollection of ever having seen anything so very like the denial of salvation to high-churchmen, so called, as in this portion of Dr. Miller's writings. Addressing his Presbyterian brethren, he uses these words: "So far from being doubtful whether you may be saved out of the Episcopal Church, my deep conviction is that *the danger is all the other way*;" that is, that being *in* the Episcopal Church is exposure to the danger of *not* being saved. The Doctor proceeds, however, to qualify this semi-anathema in favour of a portion of the Episcopal Church, of which he takes great pains to bespeak the good-will—"that there is REAL DANGER*—not in being found in an Episcopal Church as such; for there, I have no doubt, there may be as ardent piety, and as precious, well-founded hopes, as in the Presbyterian or any other: but REAL DANGER in being found in an ecclesiastical inclosure in which the high-church doctrine, with all its usual spirit, and accompanying errors, form the prevalent

* Here, and in the same words below, the emphatic capitals are the Doctor's own; expressive, no doubt, of his "deep conviction" of the awful magnitude of the danger.

system."* The credit of candour, at least, must here be awarded to the author. He is deeply convinced that high-churchmen are in real danger of everlasting perdition; and therefore warns his brethren to beware, as they love their own souls, of coming within their ecclesiastical inclosure. Dr. Miller gives us to understand, in this letter, that he admits that there may be a connexion between the gross bigotry and unchristian intolerance, even of high-churchmen, and honesty and sincerity of heart; and surely he ought not himself to be shut out from a similar exercise of tender mercy. And although he scarcely authorizes a hope that this honesty and sincerity may be an effectual extenuation with our gracious Judge, I am sure that there is not a high-churchman who will not delight to exercise that hope towards even the severest of his censors.

Against the real danger to their souls of being high-churchmen, or of even being found within the inclosure of such wicked men, the Doctor very naturally uses much warmth in guarding his brethren, sometimes by entreaty and exhortation, but more frequently by endeavouring to heighten their holy abhorrence of the abomination. The catalogue of offences laid to the charge of high-churchmanship is neither short in dimensions, nor light in character. And as an example of the effect which a correct view of its principles and policy should have, he avows the magnanimous and Christian "intention to hold it up to public odium, whenever" he has "occasion to speak of it."† Perhaps the unfortunate objects of this indignant resolution may derive some comfort from the reflection that they are not the first "sect" that has been "every where spoken against."‡ Nor will they be insensible to the gratitude due to Him by whose judgment alone they think it a great matter to be judged, that He has not imparted His prerogative of knowing the heart, to the censor who presumes to look into their motives, and ascribe to them "a spirit unworthy of the Christian name."§ For such railing, it is to be hoped that high-churchmen will have no railing to give in return; but will cherish the feeling which genuine Christianity prompts towards those (it is to be hoped not many in number) who thus revile them.

* Preliminary Letter pp. xlix. l.
† Prelim. Letter, p. li.
‡ Acts xxviii. 22.
§ Prelim. Letter, p. liii.

The few passages in the Preliminary Letter which approximate to any thing like argument, and some of the many which rise no higher than mere denunciation, the reader will find amply refuted in the following pages. On some points, however, it may not be amiss briefly to remark.

How far Dr. Miller's denying the charge of misquotation from the Fathers is consistent with facts, will appear from the work of Dr. Cooke, republished in these volumes. To this work, the reader who would obtain correct information on the important question agitated, and see Dr. Miller's strange mistakes corrected, in a spirit worthy both of a Christian and a philosopher, and with a knowledge of the subject gained by extensive and laborious reading, is particularly referred. This work, and its worthy and intelligent author, have, indeed, been made the objects of a disingenuous and flippant attack in an article in the "Biblical Repertory and Theological Review," published under the auspices of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J. The attack has been manfully repelled in an "Answer," by Dr. Cooke, strengthening his claim to respect and confidence for a thorough knowledge of his subject, and for the cool, dispassionate, and truly Christian manner in which he treats it. It is delightful to see such eminently respectable and talented laymen stand forth as the champions and defenders of religious truth.

Dr. Miller's formal declaration, "I have endeavoured to make my quotations from the *Fathers*, and other writers, with all the fidelity of which I am capable,"* is, of course, entitled to full credit. The question, then, to be settled by an appeal to the *facts* adduced by Drs. Bowden and Cooke, is made by Dr. Miller himself to be, *Of how great fidelity is he capable?* And there can be little doubt, that with all the Doctor's honesty of intention, his prejudices on the subject led him to glance carelessly over many "a folio page," and to fix his eye only on the "half a dozen lines" which had "any direct bearing on the *purpose* of the extract."†

Whether the reader can agree with Dr. M. that the least warrant for prelacy cannot be found in the word of God, he will perhaps be better able to judge after the perusal of these volumes, especially the tract entitled, "Episcopacy Tested by Scripture."

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* Prelim. Letter, p. vii.

† Prelim. Letter, p. vii.

On this main point, therefore, it is unnecessary to say any thing here. It must be obvious, however, to every one who reads pages xii—xv. of the "Preliminary Letter," that the Doctor has furnished most conclusive arguments in favour of those views of religion which have been termed mystical, and are independent of any external observances, rites, and ordinances. He who would be pious without the observance of the LORD's day, of public worship, and of the sacraments, who would discard every thing like a ministry among GOD's people, and who would seek heaven in the way pointed out by the most disorganizing spirit of enthusiasm, will find no less respectable a sanction than the course of argument adopted by Dr. Miller under the first of his eleven heads of charges against high-churchmen. The "directions" given in Scripture "to inquirers after the way of Christian obedience and hope," *as culled by Dr. M.*, make no mention of any Church, ministry, sacraments, or worship; except by an interpretation of the phrase "the washing of regeneration," which the Doctor would not probably admit. It is no answer to this, that the duty of obeying GOD's commandments has a due place given to it in this summary. For if infant baptism, and the observance of the LORD's day, for instance, are supposed to be included within the requisition of such obedience, the Doctor's own ground is forsaken, by admitting as of obligation, points no otherwise "distinctly presented or maintained in the New Testament," than by fair inference, and the operation of the sound rule of interpretation afforded by the generally received principles and practice of the *Primitive Church.** And the candid reader is referred to these volumes in support of the proposition, here fearlessly advanced, that episcopacy is even more distinctly presented and

* Of this rule of interpretation, Dr. Miller makes very proper and satisfactory use in his "Letters on Unitarianism." A reference to this fact reminds the writer of a singular instance of the different views which the same mind will take of the same subject, under the influence of different wishes and purposes. Dr. Miller quotes Ignatius both in his "Letters on the Ministry," and in his "Letters on Unitarianism." His quotations, however, are accompanied with remarks differing very essentially in their legitimate spirit and bearing, in the cases respectively. They are here placed in parallel columns for the more easy view of the reader.

Letters on the Ministry.	*Letters on Unitarianism.*
"That even the 'Shorter Epistles' of Ignatius are unworthy of confidence, as the genuine works of the Father whose name they bear, is the opinion of many of the ablest and best judges in the Protestant world."—*First ed. p.* 140. *Second ed. p.* 90.	"The great body of learned men consider the *smaller* Epistles of Ignatius as, in the main, the real works of the writer whose name they bear."—*p.* 122.

maintained in the New Testament, than either infant baptism, or the observance of the LORD's day; and has, equally with them, the strong bearing of the above-mentioned rule of interpretation, in favour of the fact of its being ordained of GOD, and binding upon men.

Whatever there is of connexion with the real question at issue in Dr. Miller's second head of what he calls argument, is amply discussed by the writers in these volumes. His reference to the comparative powers of baptizing and ordaining,* amounts just to this, that the apostles must have had equal powers with their LORD, and equal authority to ordain and send forth ministers, because they had the right to baptize.

Under this head, also, the Doctor fairly gives up the point that ordination by a presbytery, or any ordination at all, is necessary to constitute a minister of CHRIST. He maintains that even if we could prove the fact, that *episcopal ordination* is scriptural and primitive, it will not follow that it is of permanent obligation. Only substitute, in this proposition, the words *Presbyterian ordination*, or the simple term *ordination*, and the Doctor's argument furnishes a conclusive reason why the Congregationalist, who has had no other ordination than from his people, or the mystic, who pretends to no other warrant for preaching the Gospel than his own conviction of being sent, should be hailed by him as a brother in the ministry, and recommended to his communion as duly authorized to serve among them in the word and ordinances.

A smile would not be much out of place on reading Dr. Miller's grave assurance to his Christian brethren, that "the first reformers of the Church of England were substantially Presbyterians in principle."† These venerable men, and those immediately succeeding them, have ample justice done to their sentiments in these volumes; on which point the reader will find the most enlightened and satisfactory information in the works of Dr. Bowden. One remark, however, here forces itself upon the present writer.

"The first reformers of the Church of England," says Dr. Miller, "were substantially Presbyterians in principle." Now what evidence did they give of their Presbyterianism? In what could they have declared their principles more deliberately, and

* Prelim. Letter, p. xvii.

† Prelim. Letter, p. xviii.

under a more solemn sense of responsibility, than in their official ecclesiastical acts, and especially in appointed forms of address to the Deity? What, under these circumstances, were their declarations? Such as these—"It is evident unto all men, diligently reading holy Scripture, and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time, there have been these orders of ministers in CHRIST's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." Presbyterianism maintains that there was, in the Apostles' time, but *one* order of ministers.—"No man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he hath had episcopal consecration or ordination."* Presbyterianism considers it unscriptural and bigotted to insist on episcopal orders.—"Almighty GOD, who, *by Thy Divine Providence*, hast appointed *divers* orders of ministers in Thy Church."† "Almighty GOD, who, *by Thy* HOLY SPIRIT, hast appointed *divers* orders of ministers in the Church."‡ Presbyterianism maintains that but *one* order of ministers was divinely appointed.—"Almighty GOD, who didst inspire thine Apostles to choose into the order of *Deacons* the first martyr, St. Stephen, with others; mercifully behold these Thy servants, now called to the *like office and administration*."§ The office and administration to which the persons in whose behalf this solemn address is made to the Deity, are called, is that of *Deacons*; as a grade of the ministry, with the power of preaching, baptizing, and performing other pastoral functions. The reformers of the Church of England, therefore, maintained this view of the office of Deacons, and believed that into such an office St. Stephen, and the rest of the seven Deacons, were chosen by divine inspiration. Presbyterianism maintains that Deacons are only lay officers, having no part nor lot in clerical functions.—And yet we are told that these reformers were "substantially Presbyterians in principle." A great blessing would it be to the Christian world, if such Presbyterians abounded more and more. The highest churchman could not go beyond them, in urging the claims of episcopacy. If ever those claims amounted to the *jus divinum*,

* Preface to Ordinal in Book of Common Prayer.
† Collect in "Ordering of Deacons."
‡ Collect in "Ordering of Priests."
§ Collect in "Ordering of Deacons."

they did in the teaching of these reformers, and they do in the standards which the Protestant Episcopal Church has received from them. To borrow, in part, the language of the late excellent Bishop Ravenscroft, higher than the source to which the English reformers, and the standards of their Church, attribute episcopacy, none need attempt to carry it, and lower than this origin, none who know the true grounds on which the reformers and the Church stand in this matter, will degrade it.

Dr. Miller is certainly welcome to any advantage his cause may gain from the unworthy artifice of applying to the great and good men who conducted the English reformation the epithet, designed to be odious, of "*Court reformers*," repeated four times in two pages;* and the insinuation connected with it, that they sold their consciences to their prince, and served their king with twice the zeal they served their God. Fortunately, however, an argument so fraught with satisfaction to the Papist is triumphantly refuted by the impartial voice of history. Most of the leading reformers, it is well known, Calvin, Luther, Knox, and others, never objected to lean upon the civil arm, where it was disposed to favour them. It was the general sentiment of the age, that religion not only might, but should, be supported by the state; and because in their holy struggles for reform, good men found protection in the civil arm, is the enemy to be abetted by our allowing that they unworthily sacrificed a sense of right and duty to a desire to please and keep in favour with the ruling powers? No unbiassed and impartial examiner of the subject will come to that conclusion. It may be an adroit method of creating prejudice, but can hardly comport with the dictates of truth and soberness. The godly puritans, so lauded by Dr. Miller, showed *their* sense of the propriety of having a court-church, when, for a time, they triumphed over that church which these "court reformers" had established.

Nor is any thing like a fair view of the subject given by Dr. Miller in his efforts to impress his Christian brethren with the idea that while these time-serving "court reformers" were modelling their church rather according to man's device than the precepts and authority of the word of God, the puritans (godly men) were for meekly following the Scriptures. The truth is, the Church of England reformers, partaking in the general sen-

* Prelim. Letter, pp. xx. xxi.

timent of the age in favour of an union of Church and State—a sentiment held by Presbyterian as well as Episcopal reformers, and to this day acted upon by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland—and aware, as every one acquainted with the subject must be, that besides the great essentials of the Christian Church, which are laid down in Scripture, there must be, in every organized ecclesiastical body, a variety of minor provisions, to be determined by the duly constituted officers of that body, maintained that *these* things might be regulated by the laws of the land; and provided the above-mentioned *essentials* were maintained, and communion with that branch of the Church thus involve no sacrifice of conscience, all good citizens should hold themselves bound by the laws in those minor matters. But the puritans, seeing that the then existing laws did not exactly meet their views, manifested, as many a restless subject of law has since done, a marvellous great reverence for Scripture, maintaining that without the express warrant of a text from the Bible, no act, even in common life, should be performed; much less in any matters relating to the Church. Any degree of elegance in a place of public worship, any solemn setting of it apart, any peculiar dress in the clergy, and any matters in the order of divine service, or in the conducting of ecclesiastical affairs, not required in Scripture, they ranked among those things with which, for conscience sake, they could not comply. And this circumstance, in connexion with the belief of the friends of the established Church, that the public authority might act in such cases, is worked up into the devout attachment of these puritans to the Scriptures, and the ungodly preference for man's authority on the part of the "court reformers."

It may be some consolation to the "*very small sect*" whom Dr. Miller brands with presumption for thinking that the truth is not always with the many, and that numbers are not always evidence of right, to recollect that there was a time when the state of Christianity led to the proverb that the world was on one side, and Athanasius on the other. This potent argument, however, of the Doctor's, is gradually growing weaker. The small sect is increasing in size, and is not a little indebted for this blessing, under the great Head of the Church, to the inquiry which the good Doctor himself, and its other opponents have, from time to time, excited and kept alive. Instead of the pigmy

being crushed by its gigantic adversaries, their opposition has fallen out rather unto the furtherance of its cause. It has ever derived, and ever will derive, benefit from the discussion which the mighty ones around it may condescend to bestow upon its pretensions. For the love they bear to the Gospel—and though Dr. M. may not believe it, it is to be hoped that all his Christian brethren will not deem it impossible that even high-churchmen have some remaining affection for the Gospel—the members of that little sect always regret to see any unchristian arts or tempers brought into controversy; but they never can object to a full and free discussion of its claims, from any apprehended injury to their cause.

It is far from the writer's wish or design to say any thing that would wear the appearance of unkindness or discourtesy; but really it seems difficult to find a term that might not be misconstrued into such a design, to apply to the strange manner in which Dr. Miller has allowed himself to write in the sixth and three following general divisions of his Preliminary Letter. The time has gone by when the mass of readers are to be taken by the artifice of representing the Episcopal Church as savouring of popery, and as unfriendly to the free institutions of our country. Every man acquainted with the subject knows that this is not so; that many of the ablest and best champions of the Protestant cause have belonged to the ranks of the highest churchmen; and that in the same ranks are to be found many of the most enlightened and devoted friends of our republic.

Whatever there is of reason, rather than rant, in what Dr. M. says of "some wonderful influence flowing from the hands of a diocesan Bishop,"* is another instance in which he strengthens the cause of those who would separate religion from all requirement of ordinances, and of a ministry. For if ordinances are a part of Christian obligation, and if the separation of a distinct order of men to the work of the ministry is of God, the Doctor's remarks apply to every definite practical shape in which these principles can be put. If men are to partake of ordinances, and every man is not authorized to administer them to his fellow, all this fine flourishing about "some wonderful influence flowing from the hands of" an ordainer, is out of place; and the wild

* Prelim. Letter, p. xxxi.

enthusiast, who would discard both ordinances and ministry, may make his best bow to the Doctor for helping on his cause.

The rhapsody into which Dr. M. has run out in imputing to high-churchmen a *totally unjust* view of their doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and in the equally unjust attributing to them of the popish error of the *opus operatum*, will probably have its effect upon the men of low and little minds, who think they can never do a better service than by traducing the Episcopal Church; and any credit which may be gained by offering them an encouragement which has no foundation in truth, is certainly welcome where it is due. The better sense of the community, however, and its more Christian feelings, are aware of the injustice of the procedure, and are daily giving the most substantial proofs of confidence in the communion whose principles are thus assailed and distorted.

To all that the Doctor says, under the head of the *uncharitableness* of high-churchmen, about their denying salvation to all without the pale of their own communion, and setting up an indissoluble connexion between that glorious gift of God, and the ordinances and ministry of the Church, there is a short and easy answer—*It is not true.* In his partial knowledge of the subject, or in the strength of that prejudice which may warp even honest minds, he may not, and doubtless does not, see its contrariety to truth. The well-informed and unbiassed portion of the community, however, of all denominations, know that it is not true; and that any comparison of relative uncharitableness between churchmen—ay, high-churchmen too—and others, will certainly not be unfavourable to the former. It is too late in the day for such representations to have their fully intended effect. Whether in the exercise of the kindest and best of the Christian graces, or in the zealous and faithful exposition of evangelical doctrine, or in the uncompromising requirement, and most lovely exhibition, of vital personal piety, the brilliant careers of two recently departed, warm, decided, and fearless advocates and defenders of high-church principles, have left splendid evidences of the groundlessness of the common place traduction of those principles to which Dr. Miller has not been unwilling to lend his sanction. In the lives, the deaths, the labours, and the works, of Hobart and of Ravenscroft, the *truth* on this subject has a practical and conclusive illustration, to which the community is not, and will not be, insensible.

Dr. Miller, under his tenth general head, professes to find it very *painful* to enter on the ungracious task of trying to make it appear that Presbyterians are more godly than their Episcopal neighbours. It can be no mitigation of the pain, that it is incurred in a work little creditable to the Christian character, hardly accordant with the precepts of the Gospel, and not even promotive, in judicious minds, of the argument in whose behalf he has stooped to its execution. It is of little consequence to the churchman to be judged by man's judgment. There is one that knoweth him, even God. Let him leave to those who can enjoy it, the satisfaction of saying, God, *I thank thee that I am not as other men.* Be he satisfied if he can find a gracious ear opened to that petition of every one who would judge himself rather than his neighbour, God *be merciful to me a sinner.*

Not that he need shrink from standing the comparison, if others choose to institute it. He knows that a disfigured face is not always the index of a right heart; nor long prayers a proof of a devout spirit. His Saviour has told him that *Lord, Lord*, may be the importunate cry of many a one who falls far short of the faithful doing of the will of God; and that many wonderful things may be done in the name of Christ, where there is no Gospel ground of hope of acceptance with Him. He knows, for he sees, that much of the moral defection of jesuitry may be transferred to Protestant ranks; and the sorest injury done to the cause of true piety, and of social and domestic duty, by *means* having for their professed end the glory of God, and the good of souls. The principle of compounding for favourite sins, by great zeal against others, has a much more substantial existence than merely in the fancy of the shrewd and witty poet. The churchman, therefore, leaves all judgment with his Maker; and instead of asking whether there be few that be saved, and who they are, is mainly anxious that himself may be found humbly striving to enter in at the straight gate.

In conclusion, the writer would bespeak for these volumes the reader's candid perusal. The works which they contain have already done much good. The first two of them, especially, have removed the prejudices, enlightened the minds, and changed the views, of many honest inquirers for the truth, and brought many valuable acquisitions to the Church in whose behalf they plead; and the last, in its yet brief existence and limited circu-

lation, has elicited an attention and an approbation rarely equalled in so short a time. It is thus characterized in a letter from a pious and venerable clergyman: "I have lately received a pamphlet, '*Episcopacy Tested by Scripture*,' with which I am much pleased, for I have read it with attention. The calm and placid manner of the writer reminds me of Bishop Hickes and others, who, I always thought, wrote, not to overcome, but to inform; not to repel, but to conciliate. He appears to possess a clear head, and a full acquaintance with his subject. God grant that his pen may be left for further use. I know not the writer."* The reader will find these encomiums perfectly just.

Let none give way to the erroneous view of the subject of these volumes, that it is of little importance, and hardly worth the trouble of investigation. This view of it is one of the means adopted to check that inquiry from which the episcopal cause has never failed to gain advantage. The subject is, in fact, of vast importance, connected with the whole scheme of salvation revealed in the Gospel. For if God has appointed sacraments and ordinances as means of grace and salvation, and committed their administration, not to every man, but to a ministry of his own appointment; it follows that, *as his constituted means*, they must be had at the hands of *His constituted ministry*. The question discussed in these volumes is, *Where is this ministry to be found?* Every man is not a minister. Who is? A B receives the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at his pastor's hands. Why may not the favour be reciprocated, and A B become the administrator to the pastor? He brings his child to his pastor for baptism. Why not carry it to any other neighbour, or baptize it himself? The answer is given in these volumes, from a full and clear view of the bearing upon the subject of all the means of correct information which may lead to a right understanding of religious truth.

* The tract was first published anonymously.

THE

APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF EPISCOPACY ASSERTED.

LETTER I.

REV. SIR:

THE Letters addressed by you to the Members of the United Presbyterian Churches in this city, have, for some time, engaged my most serious attention. Whatever in the judgment of your friends may be their merit, in my humble opinion they are liable to the charge of great want of fairness in the management of the controversy. You have withholden from your readers numerous testimonies, very pointed and decisive, in favour of Episcopacy; and you have, in a most striking manner, misrepresented (undesignedly I believe) what you are pleased to call *matters of fact.* Still the whole performance, notwithstanding its defects, is admirably calculated to satisfy those who had rather trust to another, than think and examine for themselves.

In the prosecution of this important controversy, I shall not observe the course which you have taken, but shall nearly reverse it; beginning with the testimonies usually adduced from the writings of St. Jerome.

In order to come at his sentiments, let us see, first, what he has said in favour of the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy.

The first passage that I shall adduce, is the following: "That we may know that the apostolic traditions were taken from the Old Testament, that which Aaron and his sons, and the Levites were in the temple, let the Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons claim to themselves in the Church."[a] This appears to me to be a very pointed and unequivocal testimony. For what does Jerome say? Does he not say that the Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in the Christian Church, have a right to claim grades similar to those which Aaron, his sons, and the Levites held in the Jewish Church? Had not these officers in the temple service a divine appointment; and does not Jerome say, that what they had, the Christian officers had a right to claim? Does not Jerome give it as his opinion, in language that cannot easily be mistaken, that the Apostles made the Old Testament their exem-

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a Et ut sciamus traditiones Apostolicas, &c. *Ep. ad Evag.*

plar, and not the Jewish Synagogue? Does he not assert, by necessary implication at least, that as there were three orders or grades under the Mosaic economy, so there are three orders or grades under the Christian economy? And does he not affirm, that this was by apostolical tradition or appointment? Sir, if this be not the meaning of Jerome's words, I know not what the meaning of obvious language is. Let us interpret him according to your hypothesis. To the plainest understanding it would appear, that Jerome was running a parallel between the officers of the Christian and the Jewish Church. To the plainest understanding it would appear, that Jerome places the claims of the former as high as those of the latter—*what the former were, let the latter claim.* But, upon your hypothesis, the father speaks inconsistently. Aaron was, by divine appointment, superior to his sons, the priests; but the Bishop, according to your interpretation, is not superior to the Presbyter. Aaron is officially distinguished by Jerome from his sons, the priests; but, if you speak the truth, there is no official distinction between the Bishop and the Presbyter; they are precisely the same officer. Is there any parallel here? Let common sense speak.

2. That Jerome meant to make Bishops superior to Presbyters by apostolic appointment, is evident from several other clear and unequivocal passages. He repeats the passage adduced, only leaving out the Levites and the Deacons. "We know that what Aaron and his sons *were*, that the Bishop and Presbyters *are*."[a]

3. Jerome, addressing the Church, says, "The Apostles were thy fathers, because that they begat thee. But now that they have left the world, thou hast in their stead their sons, the Bishops."[b] Here he asserts, that the Bishops succeeded to the station of the Apostles, which could not be true, if the Apostles had not devolved their office upon the Bishops. He repeatedly declares, that the Bishops succeeded to the apostolic pre-eminence, and that Bishops (Bishops in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, such as were in his day, superior to Presbyters) were set over certain Churches by apostolic authority; as James over the Church of Jerusalem, Timothy over the Church of Ephesus, Titus over the Church of Crete, Epaphroditus over the Church of Philippi, and Polycarp over the Church of Smyrna.[c] Is it possible, without doing violence to language, to interpret these passages in favour of ministerial parity? No Sir, it is not possible. The meaning of words, the propriety of language, the drift and design of the writer—all proclaim, with a voice that cannot be silenced, that Episcopacy, in Jerome's opinion, was of apostolical origin.

4. Jerome asserts, that "without the Bishop's license, neither

a Quod Aaron et filios ejus, hoc Episcopum et Presbyteros esse noverimus. *Ep. ad Nepot.*

b Fuerunt O Ecclesia!, *&c. in Psal.* xliv.

c *De Script. Eccles.*

Presbyter nor Deacon has a right to baptize."[a] Perhaps you will say, this was undoubtedly the case in his time; but it was entirely owing to ecclesiastical restriction. This is for ever the subterfuge of our opponents, and never was there a more unworthy subterfuge. No, Sir, if Jerome meant so, he spoke very improperly. He should have said, "Without leave from the Bishop, neither Presbyter nor Deacon has the power of baptizing, being restrained by the canons of the Church; but, from apostolical authority, they have a right to baptize without any dependance upon the Bishop; his supremacy being of mere human institution." If this was Jerome's opinion, as you say it was, it is very strange that he has never once explicitly said so; and still stranger that he should contradict his own repeated assertions.

5. Jerome on Esai, observes, that "the Scriptures give the name of princes to those who should be Bishops of the Church." And, in his Catalogue of Christian writers, he styles Polycarp Prince of all Asia; and he asserts, that he was made Bishop of Smyrna by St. John himself.

6. In his fifty-fourth epistle, he mentions this difference amongst others, between the Catholics and the Montanist Heretics: "With us, the Bishops hold the place of the Apostles, (that is, the first rank;) with them, the Bishop holds the third place." They placed him below a Deacon, and this was one mark of their being heretics; for it was contrary to apostolic truth and institution. Nothing can be more to the point than this.

7. Jerome says, "It is the custom of the Church for Bishops to go and invoke the HOLY SPIRIT, by imposition of hands, on such as were baptized by Presbyters and Deacons, in villages and places remote from the mother Church."[b] "Do you ask," says he, "where this is written? In the Acts of the Apostles;" referring to *Acts*. viii. and xix. Here Jerome gives it as his opinion, that the authority of the Bishops to administer the right of confirmation, is founded on the word of GOD; consequently, the Episcopal office has a divine warrant. But, upon your hypothesis, the word of GOD gave authority to an order of ecclesiastics to impose hands in confirmation, which neither existed at the time, nor was to exist till three hundred years afterwards, and that by usurpation. Is not this preposterous? It is to no purpose to say, that Jerome was mistaken. This would not be disputing like a scholar. We are not trying the propriety of Jerome's opinion, but proving what his opinion was; and the argument I have proposed, in my judgment, sets the matter in the clearest light.

If I do not deceive myself, it is now fully proved, that Jerome believed the Episcopal superiority, as it existed in his day, to be of apostolic institution. Of what consequence, then, is it to adduce three or four passages, in which there is some ambiguity,

a Sine Episcopi jussione, neque Presbyter, neque Diaconus jus habeat baptizandi. *Dial. adv. Lucifer*, c. 4.

b Non abnuo hanc esse Ecclesiarum consuetudinem, &c. *Contra Lucifer*, c. 4.

and consequently, some obscurity? You very well know, Sir, that it is an established canon of criticism, to explain what is obscure in an author, by what is clear. This is the way you satisfy your own mind and the minds of your people, when you and they meet, with obscure passages in the Holy Scriptures. And if we do not observe this rule, we shall seldom be free from perplexity in reading any author, either sacred or profane; for what author is always perspicuous? When an opinion or hypothesis is to be maintained, its advocate, I know, will be very apt, without an intention of acting unfairly, to lay hold of ambiguous expressions, as they are more flexible to the object he has in view, than those the sense of which cannot be controverted without doing violence to language and reason. This is a propensity, against which a man of integrity should most resolutely struggle, and in which a logical reasoner should never indulge himself. Of your integrity I have no doubt; but you must permit me sometimes to question and to controvert your logic.

We are now prepared to notice those passages, which you have quoted from Jerome, in favour of ministerial parity. I cannot but think that it would be quite sufficient to refer you to Dr. Hobart's Apology, which does, in my opinion, fairly and triumphantly demolish what you are pleased to call Jerome's "explicit and decisive testimony." But, as it is probable that these Letters will be read by some who have not read the Doctor's very handsome, spirited, and able performance, I think it will be better upon the whole, to take some notice of your quotations, and at least to make an attempt to set them in a true point of light.

1. Let it be remembered, that several pointed, express, and unequivocal passages have been adduced to prove, that Jerome believed Episcopacy to be an apostolical institution. If, then, your quotations fairly imply the contrary, it follows unavoidably, that he has contradicted himself; and if so, he deserves no credit from either party.

2. The first passage which I shall notice, is the following:—"Before there were, by the instigation of the devil, parties in religion, and it was said among the people, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the Churches were governed by the common councils of Presbyters." Now, Sir, when was this language held? Was it not while St. Paul was living? Most undoubtedly it was; for we find it in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Then it follows, till that period, in Jerome's opinion, (for it is no more than opinion,) "the Churches were governed by the common councils of Presbyters." But "afterwards," [after the schism at Corinth took place,] "when every one thought that those whom he baptized were rather *his* than CHRIST'S, it was determined throughout the world, that one of the Presbyters should be set above the rest, that seeds of schism might be taken away." The question here is, what does Jerome mean by the word *afterwards?* Does he mean to date the rise of Episcopacy immediately, or soon after the schism broke out at Corinth, while

the Apostles were living; or does he mean to defer it for three hundred years, or nearly to that period, as you intimate, till the seeds sown at Corinth had produced a plentiful crop in every part of the Christian world? In the opinion of Jerome, Episcopacy was established for the important purpose of checking schism; yet, when a schism was formed under the very eyes of the Apostles, the best remedy which they could apply to that evil was not applied. If the absurdity of this does not flash conviction into your mind, that you have totally misconceived and misrepresented Jerome, all I have to say is, that your mind and mine view the matter in a very different point of light. Blondel perceived this absurdity, and, to get rid of it, says, Jerome speaks allusively, and that his words are not to be taken in a strict and proper sense; and this is your opinion also. But your opinion is much less defensible than his; for he defers the application of the remedy only for the moderate length of a hundred years after the disease began; but you defer it for near three hundred. He says Episcopacy took its rise about the year 140; but you are better acquainted with the secret of its origin, and do not give it a higher date than the fourth century. "When once, unhappily," says Dr. Campbell, "the controversial spirit has gotten possession of a man, his object is no longer truth, but victory." Of this, the man himself may not be conscious, but be perfectly convinced that he is acting all the while a fair and candid part. His integrity, therefore, should not be called in question.

To avoid the absurdity involved in the supposition, that the remedy was not applied till near three hundred years after the disease made its appearance, although Jerome says, that imparity was introduced for the express purpose of checking schism, you say, "that language of the Apostle, *one saith I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos*, &c., has been familiarly applied in every age, by way of allusion to actual divisions in the Church." Well, Sir, what then? Is it your inference, that therefore Jerome did not date Episcopacy from the time of that schism? That would be a strange inference for a scholar. Nor does Jerome speak by way of allusion. Allusion, if I understand the meaning of the word, is a reference without a direct mention—a hint, an implication. Jerome, then, does not speak allusively; for he asserts in the most express and indicative manner:—*Before* the schism at Corinth, there was no difference between Bishop and Presbyter; but *after* that event took place, it was decreed that one of the Presbyters should be set over the rest, that schism might be checked. This is the amount of what he says. Is this speaking allusively? Does he not assign that event as the cause which induced the Apostles to alter the original constitution? Who, then, that had no hypothesis to serve, would say, that Jerome did not mean to date imparity from the schism at Corinth, when schism, according to him, was the very cause of that imparity? Surely such an interpretation would be forced and unnatural. Jerome does not speak of schisms subsequent to the apos-

tolic age, in language used by St. Paul with respect to the schism at Corinth. He gives no hint of any such schisms, but directly adduces that event to prove the expediency of Episcopacy to check schism; for that was his avowed sentiment. But to say as you do, that Episcopacy was not established till the fourth century, and to quote this passage from Jerome as one of your proofs, when he does not give us the slightest hint to that purpose; or, that Episcopacy took its rise in any period after the apostolic age, is really such a monstrous assumption, as I should not have expected from a person of your good sense and learning. Zeal is an excellent quality; but then it should always be regulated by candour and knowledge.

Further: You endeavour to establish your point, that Jerome did not mean to date Episcopacy from the schism at Corinth, from this circumstance, viz.: "Jerome adduces proof that *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were originally the same, from portions of the New Testament, which were certainly written after the first Epistle to the Corinthians." This is your strong hold; and, in truth, it is the only objection that has any appearance of strength. But, Sir, from the very dates of the Epistles in which these portions of Scripture are found, I can prove, if I do not deceive myself, that Jerome meant to date Episcopacy from the time of the Corinthian schism, or shortly after that event. The Epistles in which the words Bishop and Presbyter are promiscuously used, are those to Titus, to Timothy, and to the Philippians. As to their dates, Lightfoot says,[a] that they were written in the 55th year of CHRIST—the very same year in which he says the first Epistle to the Corinthians was written. If this be correct, your argument is good for nothing. But I acknowledge that there is a difference of opinion among commentators, with respect to the dates of these epistles. Hammond supposes that the first to the Corinthians was written in the year 54; to the Philippians in 59; to Timothy in the same year, and to Titus in 55. Guise says, that in the opinion of the generality of commentators, the Epistle to Timothy was written between 55 and 58. Pearson says, that the first to the Corinthians was written in the year 57—to the Philippians in 62—to Timothy in 65, and to Titus in 64. So that the latest of these Epistles, if you take the dates of Pearson, (and you may if you please,) was written but eight years after the schism broke out at Corinth. Here, then, it is evident, that Bishops were placed in these Churches soon after the schism at Corinth; for Jerome expressly declares, that Timothy was made Bishop of Ephesus, Titus of Crete, and Epaphroditus of Philippi, by St. Paul. The very dates, then, upon which you place your reliance, turn out to be a proof on our side of the question. But, you will say, that Jerome reasons from the promiscuous use of Bishop and Presbyter in these Epistles, to prove that there was no officer superior to that order; and that, conse-

[a] See WHITBY'S Preface to the above Epistles.

quently, he could not mean to place the rise of Episcopacy at or near the time of the schism at Corinth; for, in that case, he would defeat his own view. I answer, that would certainly be the consequence, if his intention was as you say; but I conceive that Jerome does not mean to argue from the promiscuous use of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* in those Epistles, that there was no officer superior to those Presbyters at the time they were written; for he himself had declared that there was; and, consequently, the argument you ascribe to him, would make him flatly contradict himself. But if Jerome only meant to prove, as we suppose, that no argument can be founded upon the use of the word Bishop, in favour of Episcopal superiority in the original constitution of the Church, (for of that only he was speaking,) that title being applied to Presbyters even after the government was Episcopal, then he will stand clear of contradiction; and in no other way that I can see, can he be made consistent. It certainly is but fair and candid, after a man has explicitly declared his sentiments, not to lay hold of any loose, ambiguous expressions, and interpret them contrary to his avowed sentiments. It would be an easy matter, in this way, to make almost any writer contradict himself; for there are few who write much, as Jerome did, who are always precise and definite.

Upon the whole matter, then, here lies your mistake, as I conceive, with respect to the object Jerome had in view. You suppose that he meant, from the promiscuous use of the words Bishop and Presbyter, to prove that Episcopacy was not introduced into the Church till after the apostolic age. Had that been his view, we might reasonably expect that he would have said so; but then he would have been one of the most inconsistent of writers. No, Sir; his object was to show that, at first, Episcopacy was not universally nor even generally established in the Church; but that, for the most part, the Apostles left the Churches to be governed by a common council of Presbyters. I say *for the most part*, or *generally*, but not *universally;* for he himself had named an instance as an exception—the Church of Jerusalem. And by thus interpreting him, that the Church was generally, but not universally, governed by a common council of Presbyters, till schism made its appearance at Corinth; and that Episcopacy was introduced gradually, by little and little, and, by an apostolic decree, throughout the world, by which it became the custom of the Church, we make Jerome consistent with himself. It is true, that this will not clear him from arguing inconclusively against the Deacons, who claimed an equality with the Presbyters; for whenever and for whatsoever purpose Episcopacy was introduced by the Apostles, it was an apostolic institution; and, therefore, the Bishop suffered no degree of depression, (which Jerome intended he should,) nor did the Presbyter receive the least degree of elevation, (which he wished to give him,) from such a mode of reasoning. Jerome, then, must stand convicted of inconclusive reasoning; or, if you insist upon your interpretation of his am-

biguities, he must stand convicted of inconsistency; and then his testimony to either party is good for nothing.

By interpreting Jerome in the obscure passages as we do, he is made consistent with himself and with the other fathers; and we keep entirely clear of doing violence to language. This is the way in which Stillingfleet, in his riper years and more mature judgment, understood him. "As the Apostles," says he, "withdrew, they did in some Churches sooner, and in some later," [the true meaning of Jerome's *little and little*, and *gradually*,] "as their own continuance, the condition of the Churches, and the qualification of persons were, commit the care and government of Churches to such persons whom they appointed thereto. Of which we have an uncontrolable evidence in the instances of Timothy and Titus." He then observes, "this is the fairest hypothesis for reconciling the different testimonies of antiquity. For hereby the succession of Bishops is secured from the Apostles' times, for which the testimonies of Irenæus, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and others, are so plain. Hereby room is left to make good all that St. Jerome hath said. So that we may allow for the community of names between Bishop and Presbyter, for a while in the Church, that is, while the Apostles governed the Churches themselves; but afterwards, that which was then part of the apostolical office, became the episcopal, which hath continued from that time to this, by a constant succession in the Church."[a] He then quotes Archbishop Whitgift, Bishop Bilson, and Charles I. Of the last, he justly observes, that "he understood the government of the Church as well as any Bishop in England." This, I believe, is a correct view of Jerome's opinion.

But, Sir, were Jerome's opinion really adverse to ours, it should be remembered, that it is no more than opinion: but when he asserts that St. James was appointed Bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles; Timothy and Titus Bishops of Ephesus and Crete, by St. Paul; and Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna, by St. John; and that the apostolical succession was brought down uninterrupted to his time, he asserts a fact, supported by the constant tradition of the Church, and in particular, by the history of Eusebius and Hegesippus; so that we may reject or receive the former, according as his reasoning is strong or weak; but we are not at liberty to reject the latter, unless we can produce much better historical evidence against the fact, than Jerome has produced for it. This is a consideration of great weight, and which ought to be duly appreciated.

The next proof which you adduce from Jerome in favour of your hypothesis, will, I apprehend, afford you no support whatever. You say, "Jerome further informs us that the first preeminence of Bishops at Alexandria was only such as the body of the Presbyters were able to confer. They were only standing Presidents, or Moderators; and all the ordination they received,

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[a] *Unreas. of Separ.* p. 269, 270.

on being thus chosen, was performed by the Presbyters themselves. This, he tells us, was the only Episcopacy that existed in the Church of Alexandria, one of the most conspicuous then in the world, until after the middle of the third century." Now, Sir, this is rather your own fancy, than Jerome's testimony. For,

1. Jerome does not say that the Bishop of Alexandria was ordained by the Presbyters. He only says, that "he was chosen by them out of their own body." Could Jerome have asserted the former consistently with truth, no doubt he would have done it; for that would have been expressly to his purpose, which was, to raise the Presbyter and lower the Bishop.

2. Jerome was so far from excluding ordination on that occasion, that, one would suppose from his mentioning it in the next sentence, he meant to include it. "For," even at Alexandria, "what does a Bishop, which a Presbyter may not do, excepting ordination?" [By the way, you have left out this sentence in your quotation.] This, you say, was spoken of Jerome's own time. But if he had so meant, one would suppose, that he would have expressed himself in such a manner that he could not have been easily mistaken. And further: that could not have been his meaning, for then he would not have spoken the truth. A Bishop in his day, besides the prerogative of *ordaining*, had that of *confirming*, of *jurisdiction over both clergy and laity*, of *sitting in general* and *provincial councils*, of *consecrating churches*, and several other particulars. Still farther: Jerome could not have spoken of his own time, because there would be no proper connexion between the passage in dispute and what goes before. Upon our supposition, the sense is as follows:—In the early period of the Church of Alexandria, the Presbyters chose their Bishop out of their own body. For then and there, so important were the Presbyters, that they did every thing which a Bishop did, ordination excepted. This preserves propriety, both in the sense, and in the construction. But upon your supposition, there will be neither the one nor the other. The sense and the construction will be thus: In the early period of the Church of Alexandria, the Presbyters chose their Bishop out of their own body. "For," in our time, "Presbyters can do every thing that a Bishop does, except ordination." In the name of grammar and good sense, where is the propriety of the conjunction *for* in the latter sentence? *For*, implies a reason to prove what he had in view, viz: the superiority of a Presbyter over a Deacon. And what was that reason? Why, that a Presbyter could do every thing that a Bishop could, in the church of Alexandria, except ordination. This was one very good reason for asserting that a Presbyter was superior to a Deacon; for the latter could not "do every thing that a Bishop could, except ordination." The other proof of the superiority of the Presbyters was, that they elected their Bishop, the Deacons having nothing to do in the business. These were two irrefragable proofs of the superiority of Presbyters, to which the Deacons could make no kind of reply. And thus St.

Jerome completely gained his point. But, according to your interpretation, there is neither sense nor grammar in the whole passage.

There is a circumstance which deserves to be noticed, as it affords a strong presumption, that you have entirely mistaken Jerome in what he says about the Church of Alexandria. You know, Sir, that Origen and Clemens were members of the presbytery of that Church; and as they lived almost one hundred and fifty years before Jerome, they must have been much better acquainted with its history than he was. Yet, in all that they have said about it, they do not give us the least hint of what you would attach to Jerome. This is particularly striking in the case of Origen, who bitterly complained of ill treatment from his Bishop, Demetrius. Could he have told him, that he was his fellow Presbyter, and that he had no more authority than what was implied in collecting the votes of the presbytery, and maintaining order, it would have been a powerful weapon to wield against him. But Origen never intimates any thing of that kind; nor could he with the least consistency; for he declares repeatedly, that Episcopacy is a divine institution, as I shall show in its proper place.

But this is not all: I have positive testimony to adduce. Bishop Pearson, in his vindication of the epistles of Ignatius, quotes several authors, who particularly mention that the Bishop of Alexandria was always ordained, not by Presbyters, but by a Bishop. Simeon Metaphrastes says of St. Mark, that "he ordained, as his successor, Anianus, Bishop of Alexandria, and gave to other Churches, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons."[i] Nicephorus Callistus says,[k] (speaking of St. Mark,) that "he laboured in Cyrene and Pentapolis, and having founded Churches, he gave them clergy and Bishops," &c. The Arabian martyrology of the Melchites says, "he adorned the Churches of CHRIST, constituting for them Bishops and inferior Priests."[l] Severus, in his life of the Alexandrian Patriarchs, records, that "St. Mark proceeded to Pentapolis, remaining there two years, preaching, and ordaining Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in all its provinces." Bishop Pearson also observes, that Rhabanus Maurus, Alfrec, Archbishop of Canterbury, Notkerus, and Ordericus Vitalis give the same account that Simeon Metaphrastes does. If you should object to these authors, that they are too late to be absolutely depended upon, I answer, that some of them are not so late as Eutychius, upon whose testimony you seem to place great reliance. You cannot, therefore, consistently make that objection. If you say, these authors produce no authorities, I answer, neither do Jerome and Eutychius. You must, therefore, proceed in some other way, to render nugatory these testimonies. Till then, I shall insist upon their keeping their place.

I am not a little surprised to find you quoting Eutychius for

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i *Lib.* ii. c. 43. k *Lib.* ii. c. 43. l *Vind. Ep. Ignat.*

your purpose. Had you read Pearson, I can hardly think that you would have ventured to do it. He proves him to be an author upon whom not the least dependance can be placed, when the fact did not happen in or near his own time. Of this take the following evidence:

1. Eutychius was Patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century. I ask, then, from whom did he derive his information? From any writers of the first five centuries? Not one of them says, that the Presbyters of Alexandria consecrated their Bishop. From the records of the Church of Alexandria? Abulpharagius relates, that Amrus Ebnol, when he took that city, burnt all the books therein. What regard, then, is due to an author who quotes no authorities, and lived too late to know any thing of the origin of the Church of Alexandria, but what is to be derived from the primitive writers?

2. Eutychius appears to have been very little conversant with the Church of Alexandria, in the early ages. In some well known particulars, he contradicts the best writers of antiquity. He says[n] St. Mark came to Alexandria in the ninth year of Claudius, and suffered martyrdom in the first year of Nero; and that under the government of Nero, St. Peter dictated to St. Mark, in the city of Rome, the Gospel which goes under the name of the latter. This contradicts Eusebius, who says,[o] that Mark died in the eighth year of Nero. Eutychius, in this particular, contradicts himself also; for he says, that St. Peter was put to death in the twenty-second year after our LORD's passion; that is, before the government of Nero. Nor do any of the ancients say, that St. Mark did not write his Gospel till his return from Alexandria to Rome, or that he ever *did* return. On the contrary, it appears from Eusebius,[p] that he wrote his Gospel before he went into Egypt.

3. Eutychius' ignorance of the Church of Alexandria in the primitive times, will appear from what he says concerning Origen, the most noted man of the age in which he lived. Eutychius says,[q] "in the time of the Emperor Justinian, there was one Origen, Bishop of the Mangabenses, who asserted the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and denied the resurrection; that Justinian sent for Origen to Constantinople, and that Eutychius, the Bishop of that city, excommunicated him." Almost every syllable of this is false. Origen never was a Bishop, and he lived in the second and third centuries, but Justinian lived in the fifth and sixth. Eutychius also relates, that three Bishops were excommunicated at the same time with Origen—Iba, Bishop of Roha, Thaddeus, Bishop of Massininsa, and Theodoret, Bishop of Ancyra; but these Bishops were dead before the time of Justinian. Once more: Speaking of Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, (whose Presbyter Origen was, and who was the Bishop that

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m PEARSON'S *Vind.* p. 326, 327.
n *Eccl. Hist.* chap. ii.
o PEARSON'S *Vind.* p. 326, 327.
p Ibid.
q Ibid. p. 327.

excomunicated him,) Eutychius says, Demetrius, the Alexandrian Patriarch,[r] wrote to Gabius, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Maximus, Patriarch of Antioch, concerning the reason of the Paschal feast. And he says, that Gabius was created Bishop of Jerusalem in the seventeenth year of the Emperor Aurelius, and sat only three years. This epistle, then, of which he speaks, must have been written, either at the closing period of Aurelius' government, or at the beginning of the reign of Commodus. But at these periods, Demetrius was not Bishop of Alexandria, but Julian; nor Victor Bishop of Rome, but Eleutherus. Further: when epistles were sent by the Eastern Church to Victor, Bishop of Rome, concerning the Paschal feast, Narcissus, not Gaianus, (whom Eutychius miscalls Gabius,) was Bishop of Jerusalem; and between Gaianus and Narcissus there were nine Bishops. Neither is there any mention in all antiquity, of Demetrius having written to Victor, concerning the time of keeping Easter. The Bishops of Palestine, in their synodical epistle, only say, that the Alexandrians agree with them; but they make no mention of Demetrius.

I think, Sir, that I have now given abundant proof, that Eutychius is not entitled to the least degree of credit, for any thing he asserts concerning the primitive Church.

Let us now sum up all that has been said upon the subject of Jerome's testimonies.

1. Jerome has given repeated, positive, unequivocal testimonies to the apostolic origin of Episcopacy.

2. It cannot be supposed that he intended to prove that Episcopacy was not of apostolic origin; for then he would have contradicted himself, which should never be set to any man's account, unless his words are so clear and decisive, that it is impossible to avoid it. But that is not the case with Jerome's *little and little*, and *decreed throughout the world*, and *custom of the Churches;* for it appears from the Holy Scriptures and from the writings of antiquity, (as will be fully evinced in the course of this controversy,) that the Apostles, as the Churches became too numerous for their care, placed over them Bishops, in the ecclesiastical sense of the word. When, therefore, Jerome says, that the Churches were governed at first by a common council of Presbyters, he must be understood to mean *generally*, but not *universally;* otherwise he would have directly contradicted himself, as he had said, that St. James was constituted Bishop of Jerusalem by the hands of the Apostles. By this easy, and in no respect improper interpretation of the above vague expressions, Jerome is preserved from palpable contradiction.

3. It has been proved from the dates of the Epistles to Timothy, to Titus, and to the Philippians, that Jerome did not intend to place the rise of Episcopacy after the apostolic age; for even

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r The title of Patriarch was not in use in the Church till the time of Leo. I. and the Ephesine and Chalcedon councils. CAVE'S *Church Gov.* p. 157.

from Pearson's dates, which are later than those of other commentators, it is evident that several Bishops, very soon after the schism at Corinth, were placed at the head of certain Churches, as St. James had been, previously to that event, over the Church of Jerusalem. To these appointments, Jerome himself bears the most positive testimony. Your interpretation is, therefore, contrary to matter of fact, and also sets him at variance with himself.

4. When Jerome, in his Commentary on the Epistle to Titus, and in his Epistle to Evagrius, shows from the Scriptures, that the words Bishop and Presbyter are different titles given to the same officer, he cannot mean, that there was no officer superior to that order; for he repeatedly asserts, that the Apostles held the first rank in the Church, and that St. James was the fixed Bishop of Jerusalem. Jerome, then, could only mean to assert, that no argument could be founded upon the use of the word Bishop, in favour of episcopal pre-eminence, in the original constitution of the Church; for even after episcopacy was established, in consequence of the schism at Corinth, the words Bishop and Presbyter were indifferently applied to the same order. Jerome evidently intended to lower the Bishop, and raise the Presbyter; it matters not from what motive. This he endeavours to do by asserting that, at first, the Churches were not *generally* governed by fixed Bishops, but by a common council of Presbyters, and that the change took place in consequence of the schism at Corinth. All this, to be sure, is very inconclusive reasoning; nay, very weak, if you please; for whenever, or for whatever purpose, episcopacy was instituted by the Apostles, it was an apostolic institution. Confine Jerome's meaning to this simple assertion, that the Churches were generally, before the schism at Corinth, governed by the common council of Presbyters, subject, however, in the last resort, to the jurisdiction of the Apostles, and you preserve him from inconsistency; but if you extend his meaning beyond the lives of the Apostles, you make him inconsistent; and, consequently, he is no authority on either side of the question.

5. Jerome does not say, that the Bishop elected by the Presbyters at Alexandria was not ordained; or that he was ordained by the Presbyters; and, therefore, no one has a right to assert either for him. Nay, it appears from Jerome's epistle to Evagrius, that he was particularly careful to exclude Presbyters from ordaining; and it has been shown, that if you confine his meaning to his own time, you make the whole passage inconsistent with good sense and good grammar.

And, lastly, Eutychius, who lived in the tenth century, and quotes no authorities for his assertion, that the Presbyters ordained their Bishop, is an author entitled to no credit in matters which happened so long before his time; and he contradicts authors as early, and some of them earlier than himself, and who have a much better claim to confidence.

I shall now conclude all I have to say on the subject of Jerome's testimonies, in the strong language of Doctor Hobart:—"Had the opinion of Jerome been direct and positive—had he asserted in the most explicit terms, that episcopacy was a *human invention*, no candid Presbyterian should urge his testimony. He lived at too distant a period from the apostolic age. He was biassed by personal feelings and prejudices. It is incredible that so important and extraordinary a change, as that from presbytery to episcopacy, should have universally taken place in the Church, without the most full and positive testimony concerning it. It would not have been left to the single testimony of a father, who wrote at the close of the fourth century.

"The opponents of episcopacy gain nothing by relying on Jerome. They lose much. They admit the weakness of their cause, by resting on the judgment of a father who lived so late as the fourth century, and who cannot be considered as a credible witness or an impartial reasoner," even if his judgment was, upon a fair and candid investigation, in their favour. "They admit that long before his time, (for he gives not the most distant hint of its being a recent event,) the supremacy of Bishops was established. They concede to episcopacy the venerable sanction of primitive and universal usage. They bring on themselves the burden of proving how episcopacy could have universally prevailed within a few years of the apostolic age, if it had not been sanctioned by apostolic authority. But, most mortifying circumstance, they cast a blot as foul as midnight on their darling presbytery; they pass the highest encomium on this hated prelacy. In relying on Jerome, they admit that presbytery proved incompetent to preserving the unity of the Church; that so lamentable were its defects and inconveniences, that the primitive Christians were obliged to throw it off, and to seek repose for their distracted Church, so long tossed on the tempestuous billows of presbytery, in the peaceful haven of episcopacy. Yes, as Dr. Maurice shrewdly and keenly remarks,[z] if the presbyterian parity had any place in the primitive times, as some do imagine, it must needs have been an intolerable kind of government, since all on a sudden it was universally abolished. It must have given strange occasion of offence, when all the Christian Churches in the world should conspire to abrogate this polity, and to destroy all the memory and footsteps of it."

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z *Vindication of the Government of the primitive Church, in answer to Baxter*, p. 363. 369.

LETTER II.

REV. SIR:

THE next author whom you bring to your aid is Hilary, the Roman Deacon, who is generally supposed to be the commentator under the name of Ambrose. You quote his Commentary on Ephes. iv. 2. "After that churches were planted in all places, and officers ordained, matters were settled *otherwise than they were in the beginning*." That might very well be, and yet nothing essential in the Church have been altered. Points of expediency must necessarily be regulated by circumstances, and it is a puritanical notion to maintain the contrary. But Hilary does not say that there was any difference made in the ecclesiastical orders; that is, that out of two, three were made. He gives no hint of that sort. You go on: "Hence it is, that the Apostles' writings do not in all things agree to the present constitution of the Church; because they were written under the first rise of the Church." As for instance, he might have said, We have now no Deaconesses, no love feasts, no kiss of charity, no community of goods. And we have some customs which did not exist at first. Our baptized appear in white garments, which are emblematical of innocence; our clergy wear robes of distinction; our churches are grand and highly ornamented; and several other things which might be mentioned. But, Sir, what has all this to do with the essential orders of the ministry? Nothing at all. Hilary proceeds: "For he [the Apostle] calls Timothy, who was created a *Presbyter* by him, a *Bishop*, for *so at first the Presbyters were called*, among whom this was the course of governing Churches; that as one withdrew, another took his place." And do not all Episcopalians acknowledge this community of names? Do we hesitate to acknowledge it? You know that we do not. If you could prove that there was no order in the Church superior to that of Presbyters or Bishops, you would then do something for your cause; but this neither has, nor can be proved. Hilary seems to intimate, (yet very obscurely,) that when the Bishop died, the next in order took his place. Of that, there is not the least hint in the Scriptures, nor in any ancient writer, so far as I know. Jerome directly contradicts that notion, with respect to the Church of Alexandria; and I commit myself to prove, when called upon, that it is totally groundless. But now comes the fatal blow to the cause of episcopacy. "In Egypt, even at this day, the Presbyters ordain in the Bishop

absence." Here, Sir, you should have quoted the Latin, and then those who are acquainted with that language, would not so easily be led into an error. The Latin is *consignant.* This word is generally used, metonymically, for baptism or confirmation; because, in these rites, the person baptized or confirmed was anointed in the form of a cross. Some have supposed, (Bishop Taylor for one,) that the passage is corrupted, and that the word ought to be *consecrant.* The Bishop also observes, as a further ground of suspicion, that St. Austin, speaking of the dignity of Presbyters, says, *In Alexandria, et per totum Egyptum, si desit Episcopus, consecrat Presbyter;* that is, consecrates the Eucharist; but never in the Bishop's presence. But let this emendation be correct or not, it is certain that you have very unwarrantably translated *consignant* by the word ordain.

By consulting Suicer's *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*, I find that my assertion, with respect to *consigno*, which answers to the Greek word Σφραγιζω, is correct. It was generally used to signify baptism or confirmation, most commonly baptism. But Suicer quotes a passage from Dionysius the Areopagite, from which it appears, that in his day, the sign of the cross was sometimes used at ordination. It is, I believe, universally acknowledged by the learned, that the writings ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, were the production of another Dionysius, who lived in the fourth century, according to Pearson and Hammond, or, according to Daille, in the fifth. But this is of no consequence. The Latin translation is as follows; the Greek you will find in Suicer, vol. I. p. 1198, 1199; *Unicuique autem eorum signum crucis a consecrante Episcopo imprimitur.* "But upon every one of those [ordained] the sign of the cross is impressed by the consecrating Bishop." Now, Sir, I appeal to your ingenuousness, whether a solitary instance, (or, if you please, a few instances,) in which the Greek and Latin words signify metonymically, *ordain*, will authorize you to translate *consignant* as you have done; when you must certainly know, that the word used by the Latins, generally, if not universally, is *ordino?* Hammond observes,[a] that Blondel and Salmasius, with all their diligence, were not able to produce a single instance, in which *consigno* signifies ordain. Perhaps you will say, that the sense of *consigno* must be determined by the subject on which the author was treating; and that Ambrose, in the passage quoted, seems to be speaking of ordination. I answer no: he is not speaking of ordination. His words are, *Scripta Apostoli non per omnia conveniunt ordinationi, quæ nunc in Ecclesia est.* "The writings of the Apostle do not, in all things, agree to the order which is now in the Church." He then mentions one exception to the apostolic *order*, viz: "In the Church of Alexandria, when the Bishop is absent, the Presbyters *consign;*" that is, if you will insist upon the word *consignant*, confirm; but it is

a HAMMOND, vol. II. p. 62.

much more probable that the word ought to be *consecrant*, because we have no other testimony, that. in Egypt, a Presbyter confirmed when the Bishop was absent; and it is surprising to me, Sir, that when Blondel and Salmasius, as quoted by Dr. Hammond,[b] are so uncertain upon this point, that you should speak in such a positive, decisive manner. Salmasius concedes, that *consignant* in the one author, should be interpreted by *consecrant* in the other; and Blondel acknowledges, that the former word may signify either confirmation, ordination, or the benediction of penitents.

But, Sir, were I to admit your interpretation, it would directly militate against your cause. For, as Ambrose says, (according to your sense of the word,) that Presbyters ordain at Alexandria in the absence of the Bishop, and mentions this as one instance in proof of his assertion, that the order of the Church was not in his day as in the time of St. Paul, it follows, that ordination by Presbyters at Alexandria, when the Bishop was absent, was a novelty, and contrary to apostolic practice; and, therefore, a most wretched support to Presbyterian ordination.

It is, Sir, a circumstance that ought to excite in the minds of your intelligent readers, a pretty strong suspicion that all is not right, when they see you quoting passages, which, when fairly interpreted, make nothing for your purpose, and omitting to produce quotations from the same authors, which unequivocally establish the apostolic institution of episcopacy. Thus, you do not exhibit the following pointed testimonies from Hilary. "The Bishop is the chief; though every Bishop is a Presbyter, yet every Presbyter is not a Bishop."[c] He declares that "James was constituted Bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles, and that the Apostles were Bishops."[d] He affirms that "Timothy and Titus, and the angels of the Asiatic Churches were Bishops"[e]—Bishops in the appropriate sense of the word. He says, "In the Bishop all orders are contained, because he is the prince or chief of the priests."[f] He affirms that "the Bishop is the vicegerent of CHRIST, and represents his person;" and that "he decreed every Church should be governed by one Bishop, even as all things proceed from one GOD, the Father." And in several other places, this author affirms, "that in a Church there were several Presbyters and Deacons, but never more than one Bishop, even in the Apostles' times." He also says, that the angels in the

b HAMMOND, vol. II. p. 62, chap. 8.

c Sed episcopus primus est; ut omnis episcopus presbyter sit, non tamen omnis presbyter episcopus. *Comm.* 1 *Tim.* iii.

d Jacobum vidit Hierosolymæ quia illic erat constitutus ab apostolis episcopus. *Comm.* i. 19. Caput in ecclesia apostolorum posuit—ipsi sunt episcopi. *Comm. Cor.* 1 xii. 28.

e Hunc jam creatum episcopum instruit per epistolam. *Præfat. in Ep.* i. ad Tim. Titum apostolus consecravit episcopum. *Præfat. in Ep.* ad Tit. Angelos episcopos dicit sicut docetur in Apocalypsi Johannis. *Comm.* 1 *Cor.* xi. 10.

f In episcopo omnes ordines sunt, quia primus sacerdos est, hoc est princeps sacerdotum, &c. *Comm.* 1 *Eph.* iv. 11.

Revelations were Bishops. Yet this is one of the authors favourable to your cause. See Archbishop Potter, p. 175.

The next testimony you produce, is from Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople. "The Apostle," says he, "having discoursed concerning the Bishops—omitting the order of Presbyters, descends to the Deacons; and why so, but because between Bishop and Presbyter there is scarcely any difference; and to them is committed both the instruction and the presidency of the Church; and whatever he said of Bishops, agrees also to Presbyters. In ordination alone, they have gone beyond the Presbyters." Now, Sir, this last is the grand prerogative of the Bishop—that which places him at the head of the Church; for in every government, both civil and ecclesiastical, he from whom all commissions flow, must necessarily be the chief ruler. The Presbyters instruct as well as the Bishops—they preside over their particular congregations, as the Bishops do over their particular dioceses; presidency, therefore, belongs to both: but as to ordination, that belongs not to Presbyters; therein the Bishops excel.

I really, Sir, was amazed, when I found this passage quoted in favour of ministerial parity. It is one of those many strange things that will appear in the course of this controversy. How to account for it upon any rational ground, is indeed beyond my capacity.

But, Sir, as usual, all the testimonies of Chrysostom are not produced; for a very good reason, I presume—because they do not much help the cause of parity.

The eloquent Bishop of Constantinople observes, (*Comm. Ep. Philip.*) "Paul saith in his epistle to Timothy, fulfil thy ministry; being then a Bishop; for that he was a Bishop" (in the appropriate sense) "appears by Paul's writing thus unto him, *Lay hands suddenly on no man.*" This is the very act in which the Bishops principally excel the Presbyters; by which the former are in a peculiar manner distinguished, and which the father quotes to prove their superiority over Presbyters. Again: In his thirteenth Homily on 1 Tim. iv. 4—*with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*—he has these pointed and decisive words: "He (Paul) does not speak of Presbyters, but of Bishops. For Presbyters did not ordain Timothy a Bishop." All the art of man cannot evade this testimony, for it implies, 1. That Bishops, as an order superior to Presbyters, existed in the apostolic age; 2. That Timothy was one of those Bishops; and, 3. That Presbyters could not in that age, as well as in the age in which Chrysostom lived, ordain a Bishop. Need I quote any more from this author? I certainly need not. I shall but just mention his opinion of the Presbyters, or Bishops convened by St. Paul at Miletus. He supposes several of them to be Bishops in the appropriate sense of the word; but this I candidly acknowledge, does not admit of any satisfactory proof. It, however, shows, that this father believed episcopacy was an apostolic and divine institution. I would also refer you to what he says upon Acts viii.

on the subject of confirmation. He places that rite entirely in the hands of the Bishops, in virtue of their being the *successors* of the Apostles; and, consequently, the episcopal office is of divine origin.

Your next friend to parity is, the celebrated Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus; an eloquent, copious, and learned writer, says Mosheim. Your quoting this high churchman, as Presbyterians have always considered him, is another of your *strange things;* but, Sir, I do not dislike your spirit, whatever I may think of your prudence. When a man attempts great things, the greater the better; for then, if he do not reach his point, he falls nobly. Your undertaking, from first to last, is arduous, and, in some of your quotations, you are perfectly romantic. But it may be said of you, if it will afford you any comfort, as it was of a daring adventurer of old—

—magnis tamen excidit ausis.

Your quotation from Theodoret is as follows: "The Apostles call a Presbyter a Bishop, as we showed when we expounded the epistle to the Philippians, and which may be also learned from this place; for after the precepts proper to Bishops, he describes the things which belong to Deacons. But as I said, of old they called the same men both Bishops and Presbyters." Now, Sir, to every word of this quotation I can heartily subscribe; yet I do not think that you will be much disposed to place me among the advocates of parity. Theodoret admits, what almost all Episcopalians admit, that for some time there was a community of names; but this was while the Apostles governed the Church, which prevented any inconvenience from the promiscuous use of titles. The inference, therefore, that you would have your readers draw from the above quotation, is as gross a fallacy as ever was committed to paper; and it is an inference directly contrary to the opinion of Theodoret. Why, Sir, did you not inform your "Christian brethren," that Theodoret maintains, that those who had the appropriate title of Bishop in his day, and for ages before, were called Apostles in the first age of the Church? Why did you not lay before them the following passage? "Epaphroditus was called the Apostle of the Philippians, because he was entrusted with the Episcopal government, as being their Bishop. For those now called Bishops, were anciently called Apostles; but in process of time, the name of Apostle was left to those who were truly Apostles, and the name of Bishop was restrained to those who were anciently called Apostles. Thus Epaphroditus was the Apostle of the Philippians, Titus of the Cretans, and Timothy of the Asiatics." This was exactly the opinion of Jerome, and of Hilary the Deacon, as we have already seen; and nothing can be more definite and explicit.

Your next quotations are from Primasius and Sedulius, two writers of the same century; but their testimonies are not at all to your purpose; for they go no farther than to assert the community of names, to which Episcopalians readily subscribe.

After quoting these authors, you make an attempt to invalidate the argument drawn from Aërius' condemnation, on account of his asserting a community of titles in the apostolic age, and inferring from it, that there should be a parity of officers in the church. For this, Aërius was universally condemned, and branded with the title of heretic. Epiphanius calls him a madman. But you inform us, that Epiphanius is a writer of no credit, and you quote Mosheim in support of your opinion. Now, if you mean by "no credit," that he was not a man of great talents, and an accurate, fine writer, I believe you are right; but if you mean that he was not a man of integrity and veracity, you have no ground for that opinion. The character which Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, gives of him, does not accord with yours and Mosheim's. He says, "he lived a great while in Egypt, where his eminent skill and practice in the evangelical philosophy, rendered him very famous; as it did in Palestine, and in the isle of Cyprus, of which he became Metropolitan, and from thence, as from a centre, diffused the lustre of his merit and significancy, in the conduct of civil as well as spiritual affairs, throughout the world."[g] But let his talents and learning be great or small, I think he must have had sense enough to know, that his contemporary Aërius, who was a semi-Arian, and the founder of a new sect, after he was disappointed of a bishopric, taught erroneous doctrines, of which this relating to Episcopacy was one, and that he was generally condemned by the Christian Church. Had Aërius asserted only a community of names in the apostolic age, he would never have been blamed for that by Epiphanius; for that was the general opinion; but when he inferred a *parity* in the Church from that circumstance, he was universally condemned for it, and pronounced a heretic. It was not because (as you say) "he set himself against the actual constitution of the Churches in his day," that he was deemed a heretic; for no man was ever so deemed for violating the canons of the Church, upon which, according to your hypothesis, that constitution rested; but because, in the opinion of Epiphanius, and the generality of Christians in that age, Aërius' notion of church government would essentially alter the Church of CHRIST. "The order of Bishops," says Epiphanius, "begets fathers to the Church of GOD; but the order of Presbyters begets sons in baptism, but not fathers by ordination."[h] Such was the catholic doctrine which Aërius opposed, and which you are at this day opposing.

But, Sir, were I to admit your objection against Epiphanius, I do not see what service it would render your cause, while St. Augustin stands in your way. I think you must know, that he[i] gives the same account of Aërius, that Epiphanius does; and I do not think that you will venture to assert, that Augustin de-

g See PARKER's *Abridg. Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret*, p. 412.
h *Her.* 75.
i TAYLOR, *Epis.* p. 150.

serves no credit. If it be your humour to admit no testimony in this controversy, unless it come from men of great talents and extensive learning, I make no objection, however absurd the notion may be. To this ordeal, then, I present St. Augustin. What says Mosheim of him? "The fame of Augustin, Bishop of Hippo, in Africa, filled the whole Christian world; and not without reason, as a variety of great and shining qualities were united in the character of that illustrious man. A sublime genius, an uninterrupted and zealous pursuit of truth, an indefatigable application, an invincible patience, a sincere piety, and a subtle and lively wit, conspired to establish his fame upon the most lasting foundations."[k] Bishop Taylor mentions another author of that age, who bears the same testimony—Philastrius; but of him I can say nothing.

I do not see, then, but that we are entitled to our argument drawn from the condemnation of Aërius' opinions, one of which was, that Bishop and Presbyter are not, by apostolic institution, different orders in the Church; and most assuredly, had you lived in that day, and published your "letters" to your "Christian brethren," your name would have been handed down to posterity, by a sentence of condemnation passed upon that performance: for Chrysostom's opinion was, beyond all controversy, the universal opinion of that age, that ordination is the proper and peculiar function of a Bishop, which principally gives him his superiority over a Presbyter.

Before I take notice of what you have said, in answer to the testimonies adduced from Eusebius, I have some quotations to make in favour of episcopacy, which I think will clearly show, that all you have said with respect to this author is mere cavil.

Athanasius, you know, was contemporary with Eusebius, and sat with him in the famous council of Nice. He was the great champion of the Trinitarian cause; and was, in every respect, a great and excellent man. Now what does this illustrious Bishop say with respect to episcopacy? You certainly ought to have told your readers, after so much profession of fairness and candour. But this defect I shall supply. Let us attend to his epistle to Dracontius. This Presbyter was elected to a bishopric, but declined the office. Upon which Athanasius writes thus to him: "But if you think there is no reward allotted to the office of a Bishop, you despise the SAVIOUR who instituted that office. I beseech you suffer nothing of that kind to enter your mind; for what the LORD instituted by his Apostles, that is good, and remains firmly established," &c.[l] Here Athanasius declares episcopacy, as it was in his days, to be CHRIST's institution by his Apostles. This is a very weighty testimony against you.

There is another writer who was contemporary with Theo-

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k *Eccles. Hist.* vol. I. p. 362.

l Quod si nullam omnino mercedem episcopi functioni destinatam arbitraris; Servatoremque, qui eam ita instituit, contemnis, &c. Nam quæ Dominus apostolos instituit, ea et bona sunt, et firma persistunt, &c. *Ep. ad Dracon.*

doret, that deserves to be noticed—I mean Isidore, Bishop of Pelusium, of whom Mosheim gives the following character: "He was a man of uncommon learning and sanctity. A great number of his epistles are yet extant, and discover more piety, genius, erudition and wisdom, than are to be found in the voluminous productions of many other writers." Isidore says, "The Bishops succeeded the Apostles—they were constituted thro' the whole world in the place of the Apostles." He then says, that "Aaron, the high-priest, was what a Bishop is; and that Aaron's sons prefigured the Presbyters." This appears to be in perfect coincidence with the opinion of St. Jerome, who lived at the same time. They speak in nearly the same terms, and cannot be understood in any other manner, than what is strongly in favour of episcopacy.[m]

In this century lived Optatus, a Numidian Bishop, who says, that "the Laity, the Ministers, the Deacons, the Presbyters—nay, the Bishops themselves, the princes and chief of all, proved traditors." "There are," says he, "four sorts in the Church—Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and the faithful Laity;" that is, these are the constituent parts of a Christian Church. See Taylor's *Epis.* p. 95.

To these individual testimonies, let us add those of several councils, both provincial and general, by which we shall see, what was the opinion of the whole Christian world upon this subject.

In the year 265, a council convened at Antioch, to try Paul, Bishop of Samosata. The fathers of that council declare, (as related by Eusebius, lib. vii.) that "the office of a Bishop is sacred and exemplary, both to the clergy and to the people." Now if it be sacred, it certainly must be agreeable to the will of CHRIST. But, upon your hypothesis, it has no warrant from the word of GOD—it is an usurpation, and consequently, an anti-Christian office, as you and your brethren very graciously represent it. This council, then, consisting of seventy or eighty Bishops,[n] living but about a century and a half from the apostolic age, at a time when the Church was pure in her doctrine, and strict in her discipline; when the clergy were purified by sufferings, and kept alive to their duty, by death being constantly presented to their view in the most horrible forms: at this time, and under these circumstances, this council, bearing testimony to the divine origin of episcopacy, is to weigh less with us, than the opinion of a small part of the Christian world, for two hundred years past. He that can appreciate testimony in this man-

m I am indebted for this testimony to a book, entitled *A brief account of ancient Church Government*, by an anonymous author. The Latin of the above quotation is as follows: "Apostolis decedentibus successerunt episcopi qui sunt constituti per totum mundum in sedibus apostolorum." Again: "Quo toto contemplari oportet, Aaron summum sacerdotem, id est, episcopum fuisse; filios ejus presbyterorum figuram præmonstrasse." Lib. ii. ch. 5.

n So says Athanasius; so says Hilary. See VALESIUS' note on *Euseb. Eccl. Hist.* lib. vii. p. 350.

ner, appears to me to have a way of thinking, of which the small portion of philosophy I am master of, will not enable me to give any tolerable account.

The council of Laodicea, which met some time in the fourth century, after specifying particular instances of subordination to the Bishop, sums them up thus: "So likewise the Presbyters, let them do nothing without the precept and counsel of the Bishop."[o] This is exactly the language of Ignatius; no ministrations in the Church were admitted without the Bishop's authority; of course he was the head of the clergy, and sacred orders were derived only from him. The council of Arles, which was held before that of Nice, commands the same thing.[p] So likewise the thirteenth canon of the council of Ancyra, according to the Latin of Isidore.[q] And all this exactly coincides with Jerome's advice—"Be subject to thy Bishop, and receive him as the father of thy soul."[r] Strange advice, if Jerome did not think episcopacy was founded upon the word of God!

There were three remarkable facts which occurred; two of them in the fourth century, the other in the beginning of the fifth. The latter case was thus: Musæus and Eutychianus, who were only Presbyters, took upon them to ordain; but the council of Sardis would not admit them into the order of clergy: they would admit none "but such as were ordained by Bishops, who were so in truth—for they were no Bishops that imposed hands on them."[s] This shows clearly, what the council of Sardis thought of Presbyterian ordination. It was declared by them to have no validity, because the ordainers had no authority to *impose hands*.

One of the other two cases, was that of Ischiras, who was ordained a Presbyter by Colluthus, who was himself no more than a Presbyter. Ischiras was reduced to lay-communion by the synod of Alexandria, because he was not ordained by a Bishop. Perhaps you will say, that was done because it was contrary to the canons, which had appropriated ordination to the episcopal office. But that evasion will be of no manner of service to you; for, happily, we have a full account of the matter in the synodical epistle of the Bishops of Egypt, Thebais, Lybia, and Pentapolis, and in the joint letter of the clergy of the province of Mareotis, both preserved in the works of Athanasius. These Bishops say expressly, that the ordination was null, because it was performed by a Presbyter. "How came Ischiras," say they, "to be a Presbyter, and by whom was he ordained? Was it by Colluthus? But Colluthus died a Presbyter, so that all the impositions of his hands were invalid and null." The clergy of Mareotis likewise say, "Ischiras, who calls himself a Presbyter,

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o Can. 56. p Ut presbyteri sine conscientia episcoporum nihil faciant.

q "Sed nec presbyteris civitatis sine episcopi precepto amplius aliquid imperare, vel sine authoritate literarum ejus in unaquaque parochia aliquid agere." Can. 19. See TAYLOR *on Epis.* p. 114.

r *Ep. ad Nepot.* s Can. 19.

is not a Presbyter, since he was ordained by Colluthus, who assumed an imaginary episcopacy, and was afterwards commanded by Hosius, and other Bishops synodically assembled, to return to the order of Presbyters, whereto he was ordained. And consequently, all those whom Colluthus ordained, returned to their former stations, and Ischiras himself became a layman." Here is not a word said about a violation of the canons of the Church; that would have made the ordination of Ischiras uncanonical, but not invalid. His ordination was not admitted, because it was performed by a Presbyter, and a Presbyter had not the power of ordaining; consequently, there must be a higher officer in the Church, to whom ordination belongs, and that officer can be no other than the Bishop. This is an excellent comment upon Jerome's assertion, *Quid enim facit Episcopus, quod etiam Presbyteri non faciant, excepta ordinatione?* "What does a Bishop do, which a Presbyter may not, excepting ordination?" In the opinion of all the writers and councils of the fourth century, no Presbyter, from the original restriction of his office, could ordain. We may, therefore, very reasonably suppose, that, Jerome meant to comprehend within his observation, the power of a Presbyter in the apostolic age.

The third case is that of Maximus, who was another *imaginary* Bishop. All his ordinations were pronounced null by the council of Constantinople. Taylor *on Epis.* p. 103.

When the canons of the Church were transgressed by clergymen, they were either deposed or suspended from the execution of their office, but still their *character* remained; but if they performed any clerical act, although it was deemed irregular and contumacious, yet it was not deemed invalid, except by a few rigid disciplinarians. When the clergyman repented, and was restored to the exercise of his office, he was not re-ordained, not having lost his *character* by the sentence of deposition, nor were his baptisms reiterated. But in the cases adduced, the ordinations were pronounced null; because they were performed by Presbyters, "who" says Ambrose "gave nothing, because they had nothing to give." This was, beyond controversy, the opinion of the fourth century.

Upon these facts I shall make one observation—It is a very surprising thing, that those who were concerned in these ordinations, did not contend for their right to ordain, and did not attach a party to themselves upon that ground. Nothing could have been more praise-worthy, than to restore *primitive* ordination, and thereby strip usurping Bishops of their ill-gotten power. They could hardly have failed of success; for the truth of the matter, in that day, must have shone with great lustre. There could have been no difficulty in determining what were the sentiments of the second and third centuries; no more than there can be in my determining what have been the sentiments and practice of Episcopalians or Presbyterians for the last two hundred years. The fathers of the fourth century had the Scrip-

tures in their hands in as great purity as we have, and they were full as capable of understanding them as we are. If, then, the Scriptures assert a parity of ministers in the Church, as well as the whole Christian world, for the first three centuries, in the name of common sense, how could it be, that in the fourth century, hundreds of Bishops, a large number of whom are acknowledged by all to have been great and good men, could have had the impudence and wickedness, (if they had the power,) to deprive Presbyters of their just rights; and that these Presbyters should have been so stupid, or so regardless of what was due to them, as not to make the least struggle in their own defence—the people too, remaining quiet spectators of this most flagitious act of injustice. Sir, if you can believe this, all I have to say is, that you have greatly the advantage of me.—*Credat Judæus Appella, non ego.*

We shall now, I think, be pretty well prepared to appreciate what you object to the testimony of Eusebius. You say, "No one disputes that before the time of Constantine, in whose reign Eusebius lived, a kind of prelacy prevailed," [*a kind of prelacy!* What does that mean?] "which was more fully organized by that Emperor. But does Eusebius inform us what kind of difference there was between the Bishops and Presbyters of his day?" Supposing he does not in so many words, do not others inform us, that Bishops were an order of apostolic institution, and that Presbyters had no power of ordaining ministers? Do not Ambrose,[t] Chrysostom, Epiphanius, and Jerome, expressly tell us so? Do not the councils who invalidated ordinations by Presbyters, tell us so? Do not all the clergy of Mareotis tell us so? Now, who can doubt that Eusebius, who was a Bishop, held the same opinion as to the government of the Church, with all the writers of his age? What "contemptible cavilling" is it to set aside the testimony of Eusebius, because he does not give us a detail of the particulars, in which a Bishop was superior to a Presbyter in his time, when others do, and when our opponents acknowledge that they do? What "contemptible cavilling" is it to assert, that because Eusebius does not expressly say, ordination is the prerogative of a Bishop, when he gives us numerous instances of Bishops ordaining Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, and never once hints at an ordination by Presbyters, that his testimony is nothing to our purpose? What "contemptible cavilling" is it to say, that Eusebius can render us no service, because he does not assert that confirmation was administered by Bishops only, when others in the same age do assert it, particularly Jerome, and when several assert the same thing, from fifty to a hundred years before Eusebius? What "contemptible cavilling"

t The testimony of Ambrose was forgotten in its proper place. This father says, St. Paul had ordained Timothy a Bishop: Unde et quemadmodum episcopum ordinet ostendit. Neque enim fas erat; aut licebat, ut inferior ordinaret majorem." He then gives this reason—Nemo tribuit, quod non accepit. This testimony can never be evaded.—AMBROSE, in loco.

is it to say, that because Eusebius does not positively declare episcopacy to be a divine institution, and does not positively say, that Bishops in the apostolic age, and for a hundred years afterwards, were the same as in his age, that, therefore, they were different, when he speaks of Bishops in the first three centuries, exactly as he does of Bishops in the fourth, without the least hint of any difference of authority; and when he declares the Bishops of his time to have derived their authority by uninterrupted succession from the Apostles, and the Apostles theirs from CHRIST; and, consequently, that the episcopal office is of divine origin? Is it not "contemptible cavilling" to say, that because Eusebius does not expressly declare that Bishops were Diocesans, that, therefore, he ought not to be considered as a witness to that kind of episcopacy, when he gives us the names of the Bishops of the four great cities, Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria, in which there were many Presbyters, and thousands of Christians, and, consequently, numerous congregations? But this is a point of the utmost consequence, and deserves a very particular discussion: I shall, therefore, defer it till we ascend into the Cyprianic age; and I hereby promise you, that if I do not completely prove *congregational episcopacy* to be the invention of man, that I will never more consider *diocesan* as any thing but a wise, human institution.

But to Eusebius' account of the succession of Bishops, you object his own acknowledgment, that he had to rely much on tradition, and that he was but scantily supplied with historical documents. But Eusebius could not mean, that he was at a loss about the government of the Church, from the want of records; for if he had never seen a line upon that subject, tradition alone was quite sufficient to determine whether it was episcopal or presbyterian. He was born about the year 266. Now, he must have known some who were born in the second century, from whom he could have known what the government of the Church was in their youth, and who must have had the same information from hundreds who were born in the apostolic age. Forms of government are matters of great notoriety, and can undergo no essential change without much commotion. Eusebius gives no hint of any change in the government of the Church; but, on the contrary, speaks of it in the same manner in the first century, in which he speaks of it in the subsequent ages down to his time. He frequently distinguishes the officers of the Church by the usual names—Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon. He also gives the succession of Bishops in different Churches, which would be ridiculous, upon any other principle than that of one Bishop to a diocese. And as to the difficulty of settling the succession, for a short time, in the Churches of Rome and Antioch, it is very rationally accounted for by Hammond, who, in this particular, is generally followed by learned Episcopalians. The circumstance of there being thousands of Jews in those cities, who were still tenacious of the Mosaic rites, particularly of the Sabbath,

rendered it next to impossible for the Gentile converts to worship with them. Each, therefore, by apostolic indulgence, had a Bishop, which continued probably till the destruction of Jerusalem. That event convinced the Jewish converts that "the law was but a shadow of good things to come;" and thenceforth we find in those Churches a clear single succession. When, therefore, Eusebius speaks of a scantiness of materials for his history, it cannot be as to the form of church government; for of that he could not possibly be ignorant; but of numberless particulars of an inferior nature, which are seldom noticed in the records of any diocese, but are left to a precarious existence, by being entrusted to memory. In remote and obscure Churches too, where the people were illiterate, and not much cultivated in any respect, he could be furnished with but few materials: but such as they are, we find episcopacy every where prevailing. But, after all, making every concession upon this point that can be reasonably expected, Eusebius had no small collection for his work. He certainly had all that we have, and a great deal that we have not. He tells us himself, that he was furnished with all the records of the Churches throughout the empire, by the order of Constantine. He had also the histories of Hegesippus and Papias, who wrote very near the apostolic age, and who were acquainted with numbers that had conversed with the Apostles. The learned Valesius, in his edition of Eusebius' history, gives a long list of writings and records, with which that celebrated Bishop was furnished; so that, notwithstanding your *caveat* and Milton's sneering observations, we have quite enough in Eusebius to show, that a true and proper episcopacy existed in his day, and *had* existed from the apostolic age.

I shall now close this letter, and in my next begin with the writings of the third century. These will bring forward the subject of congregational episcopacy, and, of course, what you deem facts in favour of it.

Before I conclude, I shall just observe to you, that you have a very improper way of quoting authors. If it be a Latin or Greek author, you sometimes give us the English without the original, even when the sense of the original is very different from what you give it: as when you translate *consignant*, ordain; and in a few other instances, as will be shown hereafter; and you also give us the English, without referring us to that part of the work which contains the original. This puts an opponent to a great deal of unnecessary trouble. I must, therefore, tell you plainly, Sir, that if this controversy proceed, you must give the original, unless it be a passage well known, and about which there can be no dispute, or unless the passage be very long; but in every instance, you must note precisely the place whence you took the quotations. I will promise you to do the same: we shall then see the words of an author with our own eyes, and proceed in a fair and scholar-like manner.

LETTER III.

REV. SIR:

IN my last letter, if I do not deceive myself, I have fully proved, that all the writers of the fourth century, and in the beginning of the fifth, together with all the councils convened within that period, do assert, that episcopacy was an Apostolical institution. I shall now proceed to consider the testimonies of individuals, and of provincial councils in the third century. And here, there is such a mass of evidence in favour of our cause, that my only difficulty lies in making such a selection as will answer my purpose, without extending this discussion to too great a length. I shall abridge the evidence as much as I possibly can; and shall request your patient attention to it.

You enter upon this century with the following observations: "About this time, as will be afterwards shown, among many other corruptions, that of clerical imparity appeared in the Church; and even the papacy, as we have before seen, had begun to urge its anti-christian claims. From the commencement of the third century, therefore, every witness on the subject of episcopacy is to be received with caution." In opposition to these vague and ill-founded assertions, I shall give you the testimony of Marshal, the learned translator of the works of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. Speaking of that prelate, he says, "Cyprian was the Bishop of a most flourishing Church, the metropolis of a province. He was a man who was made for business, had a diligent and active spirit, and talents equal to the charge wherewith he was entrusted. The time he lived in was a busy one, and he was at the head of most transactions in it. One hundred and fifty years had not passed from the death of one of the Apostles, when he entered upon his see; and the Churches of CHRIST were then particularly careful to preserve the memory and observance of all apostolical institutions; and had certainly better means at that time of knowing what those institutions were, than any which are now within reach of the most curious inquirer. The short hints and glances which we find in Scripture, were then improved, explained, and opened, by the successive practice of the Church, from her first formation; and her practice could easily be traced upwards from that time to the very fountain; and when her Bishops were so watchful, and so well united for mutual defence and counsel, it was next to impossible, that any material innovation upon her doctrine, discipline or worship, should creep in unobserved, and not be repulsed upon its first attempts. There was then no temptation from secular views, to taint her purity in any of these particulars. Frequent persecutions reminded all her pastors of their duty; and the powers of the world had not yet either protected or cor-

rupted her."[a] That this was the true state of the Church in the third century, is, I am well convinced, the opinion of almost all who have said any thing upon this subject. I will give you the testimony of another great master of antiquity, much to the same purpose as the above. "No assignable age of the Church," says Bishop Sage, "were closer adherents to divine authority, or stricter observers of divine institutions, or nicer requirers of divine warrant for every thing proposed to be received by them. Never an age wherein innovations were more carefully guarded against, or repudiated. I might easily fill some sheets with testimonies to this purpose. Nor was it peculiar to him [Cyprian] to be so nice and cautious in this matter: not one of his contemporaries was otherwise minded."[b]

I will now, Sir, give you the testimony of a very distinguished non-conformist, and a very stiff opposer of *diocesan* episcopacy; I mean Richard Baxter. It relates entirely to the African Churches; but that is quite sufficient for my purpose. "In Cyprian's time," says he, "they were the best ordered Churches in the world; and the Bishops were the most godly, faithful, peaceable company of Bishops since the Apostles' times." And of the following times he thus speaks: "Most of the African councils were the best in all the world; no Bishops being *faithfuller* than they."[c]

In no period indeed, of the Church shall we find any thing like perfection. Faults, weaknesses, and deviations from purity may be found in the individuals of that age, no doubt; and the same things may be found in the very age of the Apostles. But for any material error in doctrine, or any peculiar viciousness of life, that age is no more marked than the two preceding. Nor can any reason be assigned why it should be. The Christians were then under dreadful persecutions, which have a powerful tendency to purify both priests and people. They had also extraordinary communications of GOD'S SPIRIT; and miracles had not yet ceased.[d] This is an *a priori* argument; and fact perfectly corresponds with it.

More need not be added to show, that your cautions with respect to this age, are by no means well founded; but if they were—if it be conceded, that the third century was more corrupt, both in doctrine and morals, than the two preceding—still the concession would be totally irrevelant to the point under consideration; for I am not about to quote testimonies from the writers of this century, to prove a point of doctrine, nor to adduce the evidence of flagitious characters, to prove a matter of fact. I shall require no more from you than every court of justice upon the face of the earth would admit; that is, to receive and to decide upon the evidence of honest men. This simple quality in the witnesses is enough for my purpose; yet you may, if you please,

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a *Pref.* p. 15. b CYP. *ago vind.* p. 532.
c STILLINGFLEET'S *Unreas. of Separ.* p. 248.
d See this fully proved by CHURCH against MIDDLETON.

require more of me; you may insist upon my bringing forward men illustrious for learning, virtue, and piety; and your request shall be instantly complied with.

I adduce, then, in the first place, the great and glorious martyr, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. A volume may be filled with testimonies from this distinguished champion of the Christian faith; and a volume actually *has* been filled with such testimonies, by Bishop Sage. This volume I have before me, and I am glad I have it; for it will save me the trouble of reading over all the writings of St. Cyprian: I shall, however, see that every quotation corresponds with the original.

From the writings of this distinguished man, and from those of his contemporaries, I shall, if I do not deceive myself, prove the four following particulars: 1. That St. Cyprian was not a congregational, but a diocesan Bishop, in the strict and proper sense of the epithet. 2. That *he* and *they* believed this episcopacy to be of divine institution. 3. That the Bishop was raised to the highest grade of priesthood by a distinct ordination. And, 4. That he was the supreme ruler of the Church, and that all orders were governed by him. If these four points should be completely established, the cause will then be fairly gained, with respect to the third century; and, I think, I may confidently assert, that if gained for that century, it will be also for the two preceding; for it will be an easy matter to show, notwithstanding your plausible conjectures to the contrary, that it was morally impossible for so great a change to have taken place in so short a time; and that too, without any writer in the third century knowing any thing about the matter.

1. First, then, St. Cyprian was not a congregational, but a diocesan Bishop.

To throw light upon this point, it is proper to observe, that Carthage was a very great and populous city. Tertullian, who was a native of it, and who flourished half a century before Cyprian, speaks of the Christians even in his time, as "so numerous, as almost to constitute the greater part of every city;"[e] and in his apology to the Roman magistrates, he speaks of their numbers in the following manner: "We are of yesterday, yet every place is filled with us: your cities, your islands, your forts, your corporations and councils, even the armies, tribes and companies, yea, the palace, senate, and courts of justice; the temples only have we left to you. Should we go off, and separate from you, you would stand amazed at your own desolation, be affrighted at your solitary state, the stagnation of your affairs, and the stupor of death which would seize your city."[f] What

e Tanta hominum multitudo, pars pene major cujusque civitatis. TER. ad Scap. c. 2.

f Hesterni sumus, et vestra omnia implevimus; urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum; sola vobis reliquimus templa. Si tanta vis hominum in aliquem orbis remoti sinum abrupissemus a vobis, &c.—*Apol.* p. 33. c. 37.

folly and impudence would this imply, if there was but a single congregation in the great city of Rome, and the other great cities of the empire? Eusebius, too, conveys the same idea, when he compares the Christian churches in every city—"their thronged and crowded societies, to grain heaped upon a barn floor."[g] Who can believe, after these accounts, that there were no more Christians in Carthage, where Christianity had been professed from the apostolic age, than would amount to one large congregation?

Again: There was a number of Presbyters in the Church of Carthage; and, how this consists with the notion of a *single congregation*, I cannot well understand. That there was a number of Presbyters is beyond contradiction. When Cyprian sent Numidicus to be placed among the Presbyters of Carthage, he gives this reason for it, "that he might adorn the plenty of his Presbyters with such worthy men, it being now impaired by the fall of some;"[h] that is, during the persecution, Cyprian had the mortification of seeing his Church rent with schism. Felicissimus and five other Presbyters broke communion with that Church; and after that, Cyprian mentions Britius, Rogatianus, and Numidicus, as the chief Presbyters. Rome, we well know, had, at the very same time, forty-six presbyters, and Constantinople sixty. In the name of common sense, what could be the use of such a number of ministers, where there was but a single congregation? Would you not think the vestry of Trinity church out of their senses, were they to call to the assistance of the Rector, sixty, or forty, or one half the number of curates, although three[i] other very considerable congregations are connected with that mother church? And why should *moderns* be deemed mad-men for so doing, and the *ancients* be considered as acting with wisdom and piety? Take into the account, also, the impracticability of one congregation maintaining such a number of clergymen, at a time, when "not many mighty, not many noble were called"—when Christians were not of the richer ranks in society. That they were all maintained by the Church, besides a number of Deacons and inferior officers, is most certain; for we are repeatedly told by the ancients, that the offerings at the altar were the only means of supporting the Bishop, his clergy, and the poor. If, in such circumstances, Christians had not the most imperious calls to observe rigid economy, I cannot conceive in what circumstances they could have them. Besides, the Christians of that day were too virtuous and pious to encourage idleness and vice; for that would have been the inevitable consequence of maintaining such a number of supernumerary ministers. In short, broad absurdity is stamped upon the very "head and front" of congregational episcopacy.

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g *Eccles. Hist.* lib. ii. c. 3. h *Ep.* 46.

i [St. George's Church in the city of New-York, was at the time of writing these letters, a Chapel of Trinity Church.]

But, to soften this absurdity a little, you tell us, that some of those Presbyters were ruling Elders; although you do not pretend to say how many of them. I wonder you did not tell us that too; for I see no more difficulty in the one case, than in the other. Who, Sir, informed you that there were ruling Elders at Carthage? "Cyprian, Ep. 39." Go on, Sir, if you please. "Cyprian, writing to his Presbyters, and Elders, and people"—Stop here one moment. That is not the address of the Epistle. It runs thus—"Cyprian to his Presbyters, and Deacons, and to all the people, his brethren, sendeth greeting."[k] You add *Elders* after Presbyters, which word is not in the address. This is not quite fair: I am sorry you should have had recourse to it; but I will put it to the account of those things *quas incuria fudit.* This impropriety being corrected, proceed if you please. "Cyprian, writing to his Presbyters, and Deacons, and people, respecting a certain person called Numidicus, enjoins that he should be reckoned with the Presbyters of that Church, and should sit with the *clergy* to make up their Presbytery: and yet it appears, that it was only as a *ruling*, not as a *teaching* Presbyter that he was to be received by them; for Cyprian subjoins, "He shall be promoted, if it be the will of God, to a more distinguished place of his religion, (or of his religious function,) when, through the divine protection, we shall return." From this you infer, that Numidicus was no more than a ruling Presbyter; because he could not otherwise be promoted; for the Bishop was still living, and Cyprian had it not in his power to secure to him the succession. Now, Sir, if this be all that you have to convince you that Numidicus was no more than a ruling Elder, you, certainly, are a man very easily satisfied—*at times.* But why might not a man of Numidicus' great merit have stood a very good chance to be promoted to some other see, among the many in Mauritania and Numidia, which were every day becoming vacant, in consequence of the dreadful persecution the Church was then under? Surely, there is nothing improbable in such a supposition. Numidicus must have stood high in the estimation of Christians; for he had been a glorious confessor, and had almost received the crown of martyrdom. St. Cyprian tells us, that "he was half roasted, and covered with stones, and so left for dead; and when his daughter, with the solicitude of filial tenderness and piety, was looking for the body, she found him just alive, and drew him out of the heap, and, by the application of cordials and proper remedies, brought him to himself again."[l] Numidicus was some country Presbyter, probably of some remote, obscure parish, and for such a one to be removed to the city of Carthage, and there placed among the clergy, was, undoubtedly, promotion. Cyprian says, that he had a revelation from heaven, "to add the Presbyter

k *Ep.* 39. l *Ep.* 40.

Numidicus," not the layman, nor the ruling Elder Numidicus, but Numidicus the Presbyter, "to be enrolled among" —whom? The ruling Elders? No; but the "Carthaginian Presbyters," and to "sit among the clergy." Again: "it is the pleasure of our LORD, that he should be joined with our clergy; and that our number (of clergy) which the lapse of some Presbyters hath diminished, should be recruited, and adorned with such illustrious priests—*gloriosis sacerdotibus.* Here the light breaks in upon us irresistibly—there is nothing further to be said.

Before I conclude this point, I shall just notice your manner of translating some of the *Latin* words in your quotation. You translate, *Et promovebitur quidem cum Deus permiserit*, "he shall be promoted, if it be the will of GOD:" when it might with equal propriety, and much more consistency with the whole of the epistle, be translated, "and, without doubt, he will be promoted." This expresses Cyprian's confidence, but implies no promise.

It is really wonderful, that a man of your sense, and, I verily believe, integrity, should suffer attachment to a cause to warp his judgment to such a monstrous degree, as appears in this instance, and in many more that will be pointed out. But why, after all, need I wonder? I find every day, by bitter experience, the great weakness of human nature. It is, indeed, pitiable; but I hope we may be *weak* without being *wicked.*

I now resume my argument, that a number of Presbyters in a city, proves that there was more than one congregation. What number of Presbyters there was in Carthage, it is impossible to say. Cyprian mentions eight, besides some who had lapsed in the persecution. Nor can we tell what number of churches there were under Cyprian, their Bishop; but we know to a certainty, that there was a number; for we have, early in the next century, the very names of them as mentioned by Victor Vitensis, and St. Augustine;[m] and this I think completely does the business for *congregational* episcopacy at Carthage. Besides the Cathedral called Basilica Major, in which the Bishop always sat, according to Victor, there were the *Basilica Fausti*—the *Basilica Leontiana*,[n] the *Basilica Celerinæ*, otherwise called *Scillitanorum*—the *Basilica Novarum*—the *Basilica Petri*, besides two great churches mentioned by Victor, without the city; one, where St. Cyprian suffered martyrdom, and the other, in which he was buried, called *Mappalia.* And "I do not question," says Stillingfleet, "there were many others which I have not observed; for Victor says, that when Geisericus entered Carthage, he found there the Bishop, (*quod vult Deus*,) and a very great multitude of clergy, (*maximam turbam clericorum*) all of whom he banished." This looks very much like *congregational* Episcopacy, to be sure!

m L. 1. *August. Sermon* 4, 14, 102, as quoted by STILLINGFLEET, in his *Unreas. of Separ.* p. 249.
n *Lib.* III. *Ep.* 5, 15.

It is hardly worth while to say any thing more with respect to the Church of Carthage. There is, however, one more proof that I shall give, of the vast number of Christians in that great city. It is this: the persecution at Carthage was so dreadful, that St. Cyprian tells us, the number of the *lapsed* was so great, that every day thousands of tickets were granted by the *martyrs* and *confessors*, in their behalf, for reconciliation to the Church; and in one of those tickets, a number of persons might be comprehended, the form being—*communicet ille cum suis*—"let him and his friends communicate."

Notwithstanding these positive proofs, that there were vast numbers of Christians at Carthage, a large body of clergy, and, consequently, a number of churches, several of which have been named, you boldly assert, that there was but one congregation in that city. Look, Sir, at the sun when it is blazing in the firmament, and say it does not shine, and you will come as near to the truth as when you say, Cyprian was the Bishop of but a single congregation. Really, Sir, it answers no purpose to dispute at this rate; and I do assure you, that I should not have thought it worth while to write a line upon the subject, were people in general acquainted with it; but there is such a prevalent ignorance, among all denominations, of the merits of this cause, and even among Episcopalians, that it is necessary to administer an antidote to the poison contained in your book; especially, as it is well gilded, and thereby secured from common inspection. I entertain, however, great hopes, that our own people, at least, will be induced to give this subject a thorough investigation, and that the remarks, and reasonings, and testimonies, produced in the course of the controversy, will keep them from being led astray by your very partial, and very unfair view of the question.

But, perhaps our readers may think, although congregational episcopacy was not established at Carthage, yet that it may have been in all other Churches, as they find you positively asserting, that such was the case. But this assertion, with respect to other Churches, is as groundless, as with respect to the Church of Carthage. Let us next take a view of the Church of Alexandria, and see if we can there find congregational episcopacy.

Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria in the third century, speaking of that city, says, "it was a very great city, and the Geographer, published by Gothofred, informs us, that it was *an exceeding great city; so great, that it was past men's comprehension.*" Ammianus Marcellinus also declares, that "*it was the top of all cities.*" And for the number of Christians there, Dionysius says, "in a time of great persecution, when he was banished, he kept up the assemblies in the city [by means of his Presbyters;] and at Cephro he had a large church, partly of the Christians of Alexandria who followed him, and partly from other places; and when he was removed thence to Collutheon, such numbers of Christians flocked out of that city, that they

were forced to have distinct congregations."[o] Eusebius, also, says, that, "in St. Mark's time, the Christians had several churches in Alexandria."[p] And if in St. Mark's time, we may be assured that they were greatly increased in the third century. The Nicene council, you know, was held early in the fourth century, not long after the time of Dionysius. What says that council? "Let the old customs be kept up." What were they? "Let the Bishop of Alexandria have power over all" [that is, over all the Bishops of] "Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis."[q] This was, it seems, according to *the old custom*. Now, was the Bishop of Alexandria a congregational Bishop?—I need say no more about this Church.

Let us next take the Church of Rome under our consideration, and see whether your prospect be any better there.

Cornelius, Bishop of that Church, and contemporary with St. Cyprian, informs us, "that he had under him forty-six Presbyters, seven Deacons, seven sub-deacons," besides a number of attendants of one sort or other, "all necessary," says he, "to the service of the Church; besides widows, impotent and poor, above fifteen hundred, and *a vast innumerable multitude of people in it*."[r] We are further told, that "they supported many other churches in every city, relieving their poor, and maintaining their Christian slaves that were condemned to the mines."[s] And Dionysius, of Alexandria, affirms, that "the whole country of Arabia, and all the provinces of Syria, were abundantly relieved by the Church of Rome alone."[t] Now, I defy any man living, let his ingenuity be what it may, to accommodate this account to the notion of congregational episcopacy.

I shall notice but two more Churches, and then conclude this part of the controversy.

The first is the Church of Antioch, even in its infancy. Upon the death of St. Stephen, many Christians fled from Jerusalem, and some of them coming to Antioch, we are told, that "*the hand of the* LORD *was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the* LORD." Upon intelligence of this, the sacred college of Apostles at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch to improve this happy opportunity, and (says the text)[u] "*much people was added to the* LORD." Further to promote this good work, the great Apostle of the Gentiles joined Barnabas, and they *continued a whole year* together, teaching *much people*. "What a harvest of Christian converts these apostolical labourers made in that compass of time, assisted by all that fled thither from Jerusalem, besides by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene,[v] fellow-labourers with them, to convert the Greeks as well as Jews to the faith, and by the several inspired prophets so peculiarly noted

o See STILLINGFLEET's *Unreas. of Separ.* p. 255, 256.
p EUSEB. lib. ii. Hist. c. 17.
q See TAYLOR *on Epis.* p. 240.
r EUSEB. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. vi. c. 43.
s Ibid. lib. iv. c. 23.
t Ibid. lib. vii. c. 5. Acts. xi. 19
u V. 21—27.
v Acts xi. 20.

to be amongst them, I refer to the sober judgment of all who know the fruits of many single sermons preached by an Apostle, at the first promulgation of the Gospel. Such was the very infant state of this church of Antioch; the oversight whereof, antiquity tells us, the great Apostle St. Peter, in a peculiar manner, took upon himself, and for six or seven years, at least, made it his first and special *apostolic see*. After him, church history acquaints us with fourteen Bishops successively there, before the heretic, Paul of Samosata, was promoted to that see."[w] And of that heretical Bishop, Eusebius informs us, that "he sent Presbyters out to preach up his own praises in their sermons to the people."[x] Let it be remembered, too, that Tertullian has been quoted, saying, that "the Christians were well nigh the greater part of every city;" and Chrysostom calculates, that "in the time of Ignatius, Antioch contained no less than *two hundred thousand souls*."[y] If, Sir, you can make out of this, congregational episcopacy, I shall say, you are "*a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*."

The last Church I shall notice, is that of Jerusalem—the mother and pattern of all Churches. The state of this Church, both in its rise, and in its progress, is accurately described by Dr. Maurice, and, in an abridged manner, by bishop Skinner, in his answer to *Campbell's Ecclesiastical Lectures*. It is as follows: "In the first chapter of the Acts, we are told, that the number of the disciples assembled, when Matthias was added to the eleven apostles, was about a hundred and twenty; but these could be only a part of the Church, as we are assured that our LORD appeared, after his resurrection, to above *five hundred brethren at once*; the greater part of whom remained, when St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians. In the second chapter of the Acts, we read that there were added unto them about *three thousand souls*, and that, "the LORD was daily adding to the Church such as should be saved." If it shall be objected, that of these three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost, there might be a considerable number, who had come up from other countries to celebrate that holy feast at Jerusalem, it should be remembered that they are said to have "*continued in the Apostle's fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers*," which, as the Church was then situated, implies that they continued with them in Jerusalem, and so became inhabitants of that city, if they were not so before. But should any deduction be made from their number, nothing of that kind can be pretended in the next instance; for, in the fourth chapter of the Acts, we are told, that on the preaching of Peter and John, "many of them which heard the word, believed, and the number of the men was about *five thousand*. Again, we read in the fifth chapter, that "believers were more added to the LORD, *multitudes both of men and*

w *Draught of the primitive Church.*
x EUSEB. lib. i. c. 30. p. 229.
y See CAVE's *Life of Ignatius*, p. 101.

women;" and in the sixth, that "the word of GOD still increased, and *the number of the disciples multiplied* in Jerusalem *greatly, and a great company of the priests* were obedient to the faith. In addition to all these successive accounts of the vast increase of believers, we are informed in the twenty-first chapter, that when Paul came up to Jerusalem, and went in to James and his Presbyters, "they said unto him, thou seest, brother, *how many thousands* [*myriads* in the original] there are of Jews which believe."[z] Now, Sir, what number of *myriads* ought there to be to justify the expression, "thou seest, brother, how many myriads?" I should think five or six, if even that would come up to the words "how many." Mr. M'Leod supposes, that there were fifty thousand Christians at Jerusalem,[a] and I verily believe that he is not out of the way. Now, as *he*, who is a strict *Presbyterian*, and of course no lover of episcopacy, thinks there was so great a number there; yet *I*, who am *as* strict an *Episcopalian*, and, of course, a lover of episcopacy, will be more moderate, and strike off one half the number. How many congregations would these twenty-five thousand form, at a time, be it remembered, when Christians did not meet in large churches, but in private houses, and such places as they could readily command? I should think, that five hundred to a congregation is a large allowance, and then we shall have fifty congregations. These congregations were blessed with the ministry of a number of Presbyters, who are repeatedly mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; and over these Presbyters, and this numerous body of Christians, presided St. James, the LORD's brother. This is evident enough from the Scriptures, and the testimony of the fathers is in perfect coincidence with them. And can you, Sir, with the Bible in your hands, tell your Christian brethren, that there was *but one congregation at Jerusalem?* What evidence is there for any fact whatever, stronger, and less capable of contradiction than this? What proof can you desire more decisive than what I have given you, that congregational episcopacy had no existence in the primitive ages? Sir, it is a mere whim, the production of that restless, fanatical tribe, that overthrew the Church and state of England in the seventeenth century. *Calvin* knew nothing about it; he was a Presbyterian, as I supposed you were, till I saw your book. *Beza* knew nothing about it—*John Knox* knew nothing about it. Who did know any thing about it, till it was broached by the *Congregationalists*, near a hundred years after the reformation? I am astonished to find you an advocate for a system of church government, different from that of the Church to which you belong. Pray, Sir, who is the Bishop of the Presbyterian Church in this city? I know who ought to be, if age, and venerableness, and long services, were to decide the question. But I am pretty confident, that you will not allow that venerable man to be a Bishop. No, Sir, you con-

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z SKINNER's *General Defence*, p. 249, 250, 251. a *Catechism.*

sider him as your colleague; but no Bishop in the primitive Church ever considered Presbyters as his colleagues. You consider yourself as his *equal* in every thing relating to the Church; and, therefore, upon your own principle, for you allow a Bishop to have some superiority over his Presbyters, your Church is not founded upon the apostolical plan. You are not the first that opposed the government of the Church to which he belonged. Dr. Campbell did the same. While a minister of the Church of Scotland, and holding one of the most dignified, lucrative stations under its establishment, he was teaching his pupils to despise its government, and to adopt a system, which, if carried into effect, would totally overthrow it. You, indeed, differ in one particular from him. *He* was an enemy to *ruling* elders; *you* are an advocate for them. But this difference does not essentially affect the main point—congregational episcopacy. Your scheme has a dash of Presbyterianism in it—his wants that ornamental circumstance; but which of the two is the better, I shall leave to the taste of our readers to decide.

In my next letter, I shall examine those *facts*, as you are pleased to call them, which you adduce in favour of *congregational* episcopacy.

LETTER IV.

REV. SIR:

I COME now to examine what you call *facts in favour of congregational episcopacy.*

You say,[a] "the first fact is, the great number of Bishops, which ecclesiastical historians inform us, were found in early periods of the Church, within several districts of country. Eusebius tells us, that about the year 260, when Gallienus was emperor, Paul, Bishop of Antioch, began to oppose the doctrine of the divinity of CHRIST. A council was immediately called at Antioch, to consider and judge of Paul's heresy. Dionysius, Bishop of the Church of Alexandria, being invited, came to this council; and the historian, after mentioning six conspicuous names, adds, 'It would be no wise difficult to enumerate *six hundred* other Bishops, who all flowed together to that place.'"—I am really, Sir, surprised at your inaccuracy. Eusebius, instead of telling us that *Dionysius was* there, tells us quite the contrary, that he *was not* there; being detained by age and infirmities.[b] He sent his opinion in writing, and died soon after, in the twelfth year of Gallienus, having been Bishop of Alexandria seventeen years. I do not notice this inaccuracy because it is of any con-

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a Letter V. p. 198, 199.

b *Eccl. Hist.* lib. vii. c. 27.

sequence to the dispute; but merely to show that it is necessary to be on one's guard, and not implicitly to subscribe to what you are pleased to call *facts*.

The learned Bingham, in his Antiquities of the Church,[c] has given us the *Notitia*, or geographical description of the ancient bishoprics, as first made by the order of Leo Sapiens, about the year 891. Run your eye over that Notitia, and you will see what vast territories it comprehends—the whole of the present Turkish empire, and a great deal more. That great antiquary has also given us a view of the sees of Egypt, of all Africa, and of Europe, with as much accuracy as can reasonably be expected, on a subject of this nature. The Notitia of the dioceses in the Greek empire is the most correct; and it affords ample proof, that if the council of Antioch was composed of none but Bishops from the Asiatic and Grecian dioceses, there was room sufficient for double the number of Bishops that attended that council. The ancient *sees* were not, I believe, as large as many in modern times; yet there was a number of large ones. Bingham says,[d] "The ancient Church had many small dioceses, as well as large ones, particularly in Italy, where many were not above five or six miles from one another, and not above ten or twelve miles in extent." He adds, "There are now a great many such dioceses in Italy, in the realm of Naples, where the whole number is a hundred and forty-seven; twenty of which are archbishoprics; and some of them so small as not to have any diocese beyond the walls of the city. And there are some dioceses at present in the southern parts of France, which, I am told, do not very much exceed that proportion. The bishopric of the Isle of Man has now but seventeen parishes; and in Bede's time, the whole island had but three or four hundred families." It is evident from all this, that arguing from two or three of the primitive councils being composed of five or six hundred Bishops, in favour of congregational episcopacy, is extremely fallacious, and entitled to no kind of regard; particularly, when the almost irresistible evidence which has been adduced for diocesan episcopacy, is contrasted with it.

But this is not all. This matter is reduced by Bingham to a still greater degree of precision, in his view, of the African dioceses.[e] In the whole extent of that country, from the borders of Egypt to the western part of the peninsula, comprehending a length of two thousand three hundred and sixty miles, and a breadth in some places, of two hundred, in others of five hundred miles, there were but four hundred and sixty-six dioceses, as appears, says my author, from the *Collation of Carthage*, the *Abstract of St. Austin*, and the *Notitia* of the African Church, made about fifty years after Austin's death, and published by Sirmond. So that the African Church, which, according to Baxter, was, in St. Cyprian's time, the best ordered of any Church

c Vol. I. p. 396. d Vol. I. p. 409. e *Antiq.* vol. I. p. 354.

in the world, had dioceses of large extent. Dr. Maurice says, that one with another, they may be reckoned to contain three or four score towns and villages. We know that St. Austin's diocese of Hippo, was above forty miles long; for he himself tells us, that Fessala, a place in his diocese, was forty miles distant from Hippo. We also know, that in Tripolis, one of the six provinces of the Roman Africa, there were but five Bishops. This we learn from the canons of the African councils, and from the ancient Notitia of that Church, which names the five sees. "So that," says Bingham, "whether we compare the whole extent and dimensions of Africa, with the number of dioceses contained therein, or consider any particular province or diocese by itself, it plainly appears, that every Bishop had a city, and a region, or large territory, for his diocese. Does this look like congregational episcopacy?

But now comes the grand and mortal blow to *diocesan episcopacy*. "Dalmatius, the Bishop of Cyzicum, who assisted at the general council of Ephesus, against the Nestorians, told the Emperor that there were six thousand Bishops in the council, who opposed Nestorius." This, Sir, carries improbability upon the very face of it. Six thousand Bishops! In the name of common sense, what building could have afforded accommodations for such a multitude? In the name of common sense, what business could have been carried on without confusion, and endless altercation? Sir, the thing is incredible. At least, when you give us such an extraordinary piece of information, you ought, also, to give us your author. Are you ashamed of him? If not, why do you not mention him? Surely we are entitled to your authority for what you assert. Who is this Dalmatius that told the Emperor this wonderful story? Did he ever write any thing? If he were an author of any note, we should certainly find him in Mosheim, or in Cave's Literary History. I have looked into both, but cannot find any such name: but I can tell you, Sir, what I have found in the latter;—that this same council of Ephesus consisted of no more than two hundred Bishops, or thereabouts.[f] Dupin also says, "The condemnation of Nestorius was pronounced by two hundred Bishops, or thereabouts."[g] This is much more probable than the account you have given us. There never was a council that consisted of half the number of Bishops. The largest upon record, I believe, is the second of Chalcedon, in the year 451. That is said to have consisted of between six and seven hundred Bishops; and that number the Eastern empire alone could have furnished with a great deal of ease, and the Bishops be, at the same time, the governors of pretty extensive dioceses; as, I think, has been made out very evidently.

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f Ephesinum 1um. Occumenicum 3um. THEODOSII Imp. jussu, a cc circiter Episcopis, anno 431, proximi post festum Pentecostes, in Ecclesia B. Mariæ celebratum. *Lit. Hist.* A pretty large church, to hold six thousand people!

g Vol. IV. p. 187.

I have but one observation more to make upon this Dalmatian tale. It is this: It is universally acknowledged by the most learned Presbyterian writers, that diocesan episcopacy existed in the Church long before the fourth century. Now it is a very extraordinary thing, that you should believe, and want your readers to believe, such a story from, no one knows who, when no mortal pretends to contest the point for one hundred and fifty years before that period. How is this? Have you discovered, what no body else ever discovered, that diocesan episcopacy was unknown in the Christian world, in the fourth century? Will you maintain that point? I have a right to call upon you to be explicit. If you will not commit yourself on that ground, then why do you adduce such a silly tale, to prove what you do not think tenable? Sir, this is not treating *us*, nor your "Christian brethren," fairly. Numbers will be misled by your positive, yet groundless assertions; and when the mind once becomes perverted, it is not an easy matter to reclaim it. Those who cannot examine for themselves, generally trust to those, of whose abilities and integrity they have a good opinion; hence, there should be the utmost caution in asserting facts, and the utmost fairness and candour in exhibiting the evidence for them. All this, no doubt, you mean to observe; but, notwithstanding, I have given some sad specimens of gross misrepresentation.

The next *fact* which you produce, is much of a piece with the last; and I do not know but of the two, the more ridiculous. You say, "We are told by Archbishop Usher, and other ecclesiastical historians, that Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, who went thither about the year 432, founded in that island three hundred and sixty-five churches, ordained over them the same number of Bishops, and also ordained for these churches three thousand Elders." And, in a note, you observe, "This single fact, so well authenticated, is little short of demonstration, that primitive episcopacy was *parochial*, and not *diocesan*." Here I must lay down my pen, and breathe a little—this is too much for me. Well, Sir, we have, it seems, according to this story, St. Patrick, who lived in the fifth century, when all our adversaries acknowledge *diocesan episcopacy* was universal, and who was also made a Bishop of that kind by Pope Celestine, converting the Irish, and planting among them *Presbyterian parity*. I shall not think it incredible, after this, should I hear of the Presbyterian missionaries planting episcopacy among the Indians whom they convert, nor of Episcopal missionaries planting a Presbyterian regimen among them. We have seen, in our day, strange inversions in the political world; why not also in the ecclesiastical? The thing is not physically impossible, it must be confessed, however unanswerable the moral arguments may be. But let us leave *a priori* reasoning, and come to the evidence of the fact.

What says Mosheim upon this subject? "Patrick brought over great numbers of the Irish to the Christian religion, and

founded, in the year 472, the Archbishopric of Armagh, which has ever since remained the Metropolitan see of the Irish nation."[h] This testimony is confirmed by the authority of Prosper, which is decisive upon this point. Here now is a curiosity, *nuper inventum, et ante hæc tempora inauditum*—an Archbishop presiding over three hundred and sixty-five *Presbyterian Bishops*, and *three thousand Elders*, some *preaching* and some *ruling* Elders! And this Archbishop establishing this regimen, under the direction of the *Roman Pontiff!* To propose this, is to set common sense at defiance. "But does not Usher say this, or something like?" No, Sir, he says no such thing, nor any thing like it. But if he did, what is his authority? All that he knew about the ancient Irish Church, he derives from some fragments of the lives of some Irish Bishops, which he too hastily adopted, for the purpose of proving that Palladius was not the first Bishop of Ireland. "But," says the learned translator of Mosheim, "it has been evidently proved, among others, by Bollandus, that these *fragments* are of no earlier date than the twelfth century, and are besides, the most of them fabulous."

We have no records of the Church of Ireland before the twelfth century, upon which we can place the least dependance. Bingham observes, that "the accounts are so uncertain and dark, that Carolus a sancto Paulo does not pretend to give any other catalogue of them, but what he has from Camden and the *Provinciale Romanum*, both of which are modern accounts. These catalogues take notice of four archbishoprics in Ireland, which number of Metropolitical sees was first introduced by Pope Eugenius, in the year 1151. Yet, because we have no catalogues of Irish dioceses older or more authentic than these, it will not be amiss to insert them." He then gives Camden's list, which amounts to four Archbishops, and fifty-two Suffragans, and afterwards that of the Provinciale Romanum, published by Carolus a sancto Paulo, which makes the same number of Archbishops, but increases the Suffragans to fifty-three. "This seems," says Bingham, "to have been the greatest number of Bishops that Ireland ever had since it was a Christian nation. For as to the pretence of some modern writers, that there were at one time no less than three hundred and sixty-five Bishops ordained by St. Patrick, it is solidly refuted by Dr. Maurice, who shows plainly, that the story is not to be understood of so many Bishops at once, but of that number in the reign of four kings successively, and in the compass of one hundred years; which any one that carefully reads Bishop Usher's Antiquities, whence the ground of the story is fetched, will easily discern. And it is no hard matter to conceive, then, how there might be three hundred and fifty; or, as Nennius tells the story, three hundred and sixty-five Bishops in the compass of a whole century, though there were not above fifty or threescore at one

h *Eccl. Hist.* vol. II. p. 9.

time living together."[1] I think your well authenticated fact is now completely annihilated.

Another of your *facts to prove congregational episcopacy*, is, the manner in which the Bishop and his clergy sat in the church. Sir, I am tired of your facts. They are either so little to the purpose, or so totally groundless, that they should not have had a moment's consideration from me, were it not that I am confident persons of little reading, and less thinking, will be led into error by them. But this last fact is so much below even *your* standard of facts, that I think it hardly worth while to take notice of it.

Pray, Sir, were there no particular occasions when the Bishop required the aid of a number of his Presbyters? No ordinations? No confirmations in the Cathedral Church? No *diocesan conventions?* How strangely inadvertent must you have been to these circumstances, when you urged such a shadow in favour of your hypothesis! Who would suppose, that a semicircle of seats in Trinity Church for the Bishop's Presbyters, would afford to a disputant in some future day, an argument against diocesan episcopacy in this state? Your cause must really be in great want of support, when you are obliged to have recourse to such trifles.

Your last fact is as follows: "The early writers represent the Bishop as *living in the same house with his Presbyters or Elders*—a house near the place of worship, to which they resorted, and capable of accommodating them all." Here, as usual, you take care not to tell us who those *early writers* are, or how *early* they are; that would, perhaps, have diminished the weight of the evidence. And you also state the case in such a manner, that your readers who know no better, would suppose that it was the universal practice. Let us for a moment suppose this to have been the case. Take an instance in the third century. It is certain that Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, had forty-six Presbyters under him. Now, you know very well, that clergymen generally marry, and that they have as many children as other folks. I doubt whether there is one clergyman in twenty that does not marry; but say, if you please, one in ten. Cornelius, then, must have had upwards of forty married Presbyters, with their wives and children, in the same house with him. You cannot reckon less than three children to a family; so there must have been upwards of eighty men and women, and of a hundred and twenty children in the same house with Bishop Cornelius. Mercy on the man! He must have had a shocking time of it. If he had nothing else to induce him to wish for martyrdom, than to get rid of such a tormenting scene, I should not much blame him. No, Sir, this is too ridiculous for any man to believe. The fact was, that in the latter part of the fourth century, when the spirit of monkery

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1 *Antiq.* Vol. I. p. 490.

began to prevail, there were *a few* associations of that kind. Those clergymen, of course, did not marry; nor could they have been the clergy of the country. "But," says Bingham, "this they did not by any general canon, but only upon choice, or particular combination and agreement, in some particular Churches. As Sozomen notes it to have been the custom at Rinocorura, in Egypt, and Possidius affirms the same of the Cathedral Church of St. Austin."[k] But this must be confined to the city Presbyters, as that Bishop's diocese extended to Fessala, forty miles from Hippo. And thus we see to what the sum total of your facts amounts.

I have now, if I do not deceive myself, fully answered your proofs from facts, that congregational episcopacy was the government of the Church in the third and fourth centuries; and have also given proof enough to an impartial mind, from the circumstance of a Bishop's having a number of Presbyters, and churches, and thousands of Christians under his government, that he was a proper diocesan. But I shall not leave the matter here—I have a vast collection of proofs, of every possible kind, now lying before me, in Sage's Cyprianic Age; which proofs, I inform you, once for all, I shall take the liberty of borrowing, so far as will answer my purpose.

1. First, then: It cannot be contradicted that Cyprian was Bishop of Carthage, and that he had a number of Presbyters under him, contradistinguished from the Bishop and Deacons;—*Priests*, in the language then current—not *ruling Elders*, but such as laboured in the word and sacraments—such as were honoured with the *divine Priesthood*—such as were constituted in the *clerical ministry*—who attended the Altar, and offered up the public prayers.[l]—Such as, in the time of persecution, went to the prisons, and *gave the Holy Eucharist to the confessors*.[m] In a word, such as were joined with the Bishop in the *sacerdotal honour*.[n] Such were the Presbyters of St. Cyprian's Church; "For," says Sage, "as to your *Lay-Elders*, your *Ruling*, contradistinct from *Teaching* Presbyters, now so much in vogue, there is as profound a silence of them in St. Cyprian's works and time, as there is of the *solemn league and covenant*. And yet, considering how much he has left upon record about the governors, the government, and the discipline of the Church, if there had been any such Presbyters, it is next to a miracle, that he should not so much as once have mentioned them."[o]

2. Let the Presbyters of a Church be ever so numerous, and the number of the laity ever so great, the Bishop's authority and pastoral relation extended to all. The Church was compared to a *ship*, and the Bishop was the *master*[p]—he was the *father*, and all the Christians within his district were his *children*—he was the *governor*, the *rector*, the *head*, the *judge*, in all spi-

k *Antiq.* Vol. I. p. 195.
l *Ep.* i. p. 1.
m Ibid. v. p. 11.
n Ibid. lxi.
o *Princip. Cyp. Age*, p. 8.
p *Ep.* 41.

ritual matters within his diocese.[q] He was the *chief pastor*, and Presbyters were pastors in subordination to him.

Let us now try if we can ascribe these characters to the Moderator of a Presbytery. A Presbyterian Moderator, *as such*, is no *Church Governor* at all; but a Bishop, *as such*, was *chief pastor*, *judge*, *head*, *master*, *rector*, *governor*, of all the Christians within his diocese. A Presbyterian Moderator, as such, has no direct, immediate, formal relation to *the people*, but only to the *Presbytery*. He is the mouth, and keeps order in managing the affairs of the *Presbytery*, not of the *Church*, or rather churches, within the bounds of that Presbytery; but a Bishop in St. Cyprian's time, was a different thing—his prelacy related to the *laity*, as well as to the *clergy*. If, Sir, you can reconcile these things, you are the first man I have ever met with, who can reconcile contradictions. But,

3. It was a maxim in the Cyprianic age, that there could be but *one Bishop at once* in a Church. Upon this principle, Cyprian repeatedly reasons against schism, as you may see by consulting the references at the bottom of the page.[r] But, upon your principle, there were as many Bishops as there were churches. There must have been at least eight at Carthage, forty-six at Rome, and a number, more or less, in all the great Churches, in which, I have shown, there was a plurality of Presbyters; and each of these Bishops, according to your scheme, had a number of Elders, some *preaching* and some *ruling* Elders. Nothing can be more opposite than these two plans of ecclesiastical regimen.

Nor was this principle of one Bishop to a Church, although that Church was composed of a great number of churches, peculiar to St. Cyprian. Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, insists on it in his Epistle to Fabius, and severely censures Novatianus for acting contrary to it. And when Maximus, Urbanus, &c. deserted Novatianus, and returned to Cornelius' communion, they made a solemn confession, that upon that maxim they ought to have considered Novatianus as a false and schismatical Bishop. "We know," say they, "that Cornelius was chosen Bishop of the most holy Catholic Church, by the Omnipotent God, and Our Lord Jesus Christ. We confess our error; we were imposed upon. For we are not ignorant that there is one God—one Christ, one Lord, whom we have confessed—one Holy Ghost; and that there ought to be but one Bishop in a Catholic Church;"[s] that is, *at once*, of one Church or city.

4. When a *see* was canonically vacant, an election was made, differently, indeed, as to the mode, in different Churches. The Bishops of the province, at least a number of them, met, for the purpose of ordaining the Bishop elect. His orders, as a Presbyter, were not sufficient; he received a *new ordination*.

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q Gubernator: *passim*. Rector: *Ep.* 59. Caput. *Ep.* 45. Judex: *Ep.* 59.
r *Epistles* 35, 44, 45, 46, 59, 61, 68, 69, and *Un. Eccles.* p. 110. s *Ep.* 49.

Thus, Cyprian was first a Presbyter, and afterwards ordained Bishop of Carthage, according to his Deacon Pontius, Eusebius, and Jerome.[t] Thus, Cyprian tells us, that "Cornelius had advanced, gradually, through all the inferior stations;"[u] and, consequently, had been a Presbyter before he was a Bishop. Yet we find, when he was promoted to the see of Rome, he was ordained by sixteen Bishops.[v] Thus we find, also, in the promotion of Sabinus to the bishopric from which Basilides had fallen, that he was ordained by the imposition of the hands of the Bishops present.[w] Thus, Fortunatus, Achimnius, Optatus, Privatianus, Donatulus, and Felix, six Bishops, ordained a Bishop at Capsis.[x] "Nay," says Sage, "this necessity of a new ordination for raising one to the episcopal power, was so notorious *then*, that the schismatics themselves believed it indispensable; and, therefore, Novatianus, though formerly a Presbyter, (as Cornelius expressly says, in his epistle to Fabius,) when he contended with Cornelius for the Chair of Rome, that he might have the *show*, at least, of a *canonical* ordination, got three inconsiderate Bishops to come to the city, and then forced them to give him the episcopal commission, *by an imaginary and vain imposition of hands*, as Cornelius expresses it.[y] Thus, also, when Fortunatus, one of the five Presbyters, who joined with the schismatical Felicissimus against St. Cyprian, set himself up as an anti-bishop at Carthage, he was ordained by *five false Bishops*.[z]

Now, Sir, try if you can reconcile all this with the notion of a Presbyterian Moderator. What need was there for sixteen Bishops, that is, sixteen Moderators, to meet at Rome, to conduct the election of a Moderator? Could not the Presbytery of Rome have chosen their own Moderator, without the trouble or the inspection of so many Moderators of other Presbyteries? Again: What necessity was there for a *new* ordination for constituting one a *Moderator of a Presbytery?* I have never heard of any ceremony in your Presbyteries on such an occasion; to be sure, not that of ordaining. And if they must have had an ordination, why could not the forty-six Presbyters at Rome have done the business, without sending for sixteen neighbouring Moderators? Sir! Sir! this is far, very far below men of sense. It is, to speak plainly, *the very mystery of ridiculousness.*

I have now proved, I think, to a moral certainty, that episcopacy, in the age of Cyprian, was of the *diocesan* kind; and that *congregational* episcopacy is at irreconcileable variance with all the documents of that age, so far as I have adduced them. I have shown, with a force of evidence that appears to me to be next to irresistible, that Bishops had, in the third century, a number of Presbyters, and thousands of Christians, and, consequently, numerous congregations, under their spiritual

t PONT. in *Vita Cyp.* EUSEB. *Chron.* HIERON. *Catal.* u *Ep.* 55. v Ibid.
w *Ep.* 67. x *Ep.* 56. y EUSEB. lib. vi. c. 43. z *Ep.* 59.

jurisdiction, and that when they were raised to "the sublime top of the priesthood," [*sacerdotii sublime fastigium*] as Cyprian speaks, it was done, not *by election only*, but by a *new imposition of hands*, or new ordination, by a number of Bishops belonging to the province. This, of course, designated him to a higher sphere; invested him with superior powers to those which he possessed while a Presbyter. I shall now show what those superior powers were; and this being done, I think the question, so far as relates to the third century, will be completely settled.

1. The Bishop had the *sole power of confirmation.* For this we have St. Cyprian's express testimony, in his epistle to Jubaianus. It was the custom "to offer such as were baptized to the Bishops, that, by their prayers, and the laying on of their hands, they might receive the HOLY GHOST, and be consummated by the sign of our LORD." And he expressly founds this practice, as, after him, Jerome did, upon Acts viii. 14, &c.[a] Cornelius also, in his epistle to Fabius, makes it an argument against Novatianus, that though he was baptized, yet he was not confirmed by the Bishop.[b] Firmilian also, in his epistle to Cyprian says, "The Elders" (meaning the Bishops) "who govern the Church, possess the power of baptism, confirmation, and ordination."[c]

2. The Bishop had the *sole power of ordination.* No ordination could be performed without him; but he *alone* could do it. It is true, St. Cyprian generally *did*, and every prudent Bishop generally *will*, consult the clergy that are within his call; and will not introduce among them men of whom they disapprove. But there is no obligation to this, but what arises from expediency. This was evidently St. Cyprian's sentiment and practice. In his 38th epistle, having, in the place of his retirement, ordained Aurelius a *reader* in the Church, he acquaints his Presbyters and Deacons with it. He begins his letter thus: "In all ecclesiastical ordinations, most dear brethren, I used to consult you before hand, and to examine the manners and merits of every one with common advice."[d] In this instance he had deviated from his common practice, which shows that he had the power and the right of doing so whenever he thought proper; and this right he had *in all ordinations;* for he speaks indefinitely, *in clericis ordinationibus.* We have another testimony to the same purpose in his 41st epistle, in which we are informed, that he had deputied two Bishops, Caldonius and Herculanus, and two of his Presbyters, Rogatianus and Numidicus, "to examine the ages, qualifications, and merits of some in Carthage, that *he, whose province it was to promote men to ecclesiastical offices,* might be well informed about them, and promote none but such as were meek, humble, and worthy."[e] This is a striking testimony; for he speaks of all orders, without exception; and of

a *Ep.* 73. b Apud EUSEB. *Eccles. Hist.* lib. vi. c. 43.
c *Ep.* 75. d *Ep.* 38. e *Ep.* 41.

himself in the singular number; and founds that power upon his having the government of the Church committed to him.[f]

A third testimony you will find in his 72d epistle, written to Stephen, Bishop of Rome. It runs thus: "By common consent and authority, dear brother, we tell you farther, that if any Presbyters, or Deacons, who have either been ordained before in the Catholic Church, and have afterwards turned perfidious, and rebellious against the Church, or have been promoted by a profane ordination, in a state of schism, by false Bishops, and Anti-Christs against our LORD's institution; that such, if they should return, shall only be admitted to lay-communion." From this testimony it appears, 1. That all ordinations of Presbyters, as well as Deacons, were performed by Bishops. 2. That the power of ordaining was so universally acknowledged to belong to Bishops, and to them only, that even the schismatics themselves observed the common rule. They would not, by departing from it, subject their ordinations to the charge of invalidity.

We have another proof of this point in Cornelius' letter to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch. He says, Novatianus was ordained a Presbyter, merely by the favour of the Bishop of Rome; that all the clergy, and many of the people opposed it; yet, notwithstanding, he ordained him; promising, however, that he would not make a precedent of it.[g]

Thus, Sir, we have ample proof, that a Bishop, in the age of St. Cyprian, had the *sole power of ordination.*

There is another very important point, in which Bishops were superior to Presbyters, and that is, the *supreme power of the keys.* No man could be admitted into the Church, nor excommunicated, nor absolved, nor restored to communion, if the Bishop refused to concur. Neither could any ecclesiastical law be made, nor rescinded, nor dispensed with, without his consent. All discipline in the Church depends upon the sacraments, and neither sacrament could be administered without authority and allowance from him. Of this, we have full proof in the works of that holy martyr. Let one suffice.

It was a question much agitated in his day, whether baptism, performed by heretics, or schismatics, was valid. St. Cyprian maintained, that it was not. Now, Sir, consider his reasoning. "It is manifest," says he, "where, and by whom, the remission of sins can be given, which is given in baptism. For our LORD gave first to Peter—that power, that *whatsoever he should loose on earth, should be loosed in heaven;* and after his resurrection, he gave it to his Apostles, when he said, *as my Father hath sent me, &c.* Whence we learn, that none can baptize authoritatively but the Bishops, and those who are founded in the evangelical law, and our LORD's institution. Further, dearest brother, we want not divine warrant for it, when we say, that GOD hath disposed all things by a certain law, and a proper

f See *Cyprianic Age*, p. 40.

g EUSEB. *Hist.* lib. vi. c. 43.

ordinance; and that none can usurp any thing against the Bishops, all being subject to them. For Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, attempted to assume to themselves a privilege of sacrificing against Moses and Aaron the Priest, and they were punished for it, because it was unlawful."[h] Now, whatever you may think of the force of Cyprian's argument, that baptism, performed by heretics, or schismatics, was not valid, because not done by the Bishop, or with his allowance; certain it is, that he argues upon a universally received principle in his time, that none but Bishops, and those to whom they gave authority, had a right to baptize: Firmilian has been already quoted to the same purpose. And Fortunatus, Bishop of Thuchaboris, in his suffrage at the council of Carthage, expressly says, "JESUS CHRIST, our LORD and GOD, built his Church upon a rock, and not upon heresy, and gave the power of baptizing to Bishops, and not to heretics," &c.[i] This also was the opinion of Tertullian and Ignatius, as we shall see in due time.

2. In the age of Cyprian, the Bishop had equal power with respect to the holy Eucharist. No Presbyter, within his diocese, could administer it but in subordination to him. The testimonies to this purpose are too numerous to be repeated. Take two or three. In his sixteenth epistle, directed to his Presbyters and Deacons, he resents, in strong terms, the conduct of some of the former, who had admitted the lapsed to the Eucharist without his permission. "Such," says he, "deny me the honour of which, by divine right, I am possessed," &c. The 15th, 16th, and 17th epistles are to the same purpose. And in his 59th epistle, he has these words: "Is glory given to GOD when . . . Presbyters, contemning and trampling on their Bishops, should preach peace with deceiving words, and give the communion," &c.

I will add one testimony which relates to both the sacraments. It is in the 69th epistle, written to Magnus. His design is to represent the atrocious guilt of schism and the wretched condition of schismatics. Amongst other arguments, he uses the following: "Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, were of the same religion of which Moses and Aaron were, and served the same GOD. But, because they transgressed the limits of their own stations, and usurped a power of sacrificing in opposition to Aaron the Priest, they were punished in a miraculous manner; neither could their sacrifices be valid or profitable. Yet these men had made no schism; they had not departed from the tabernacle, nor raised another altar, which now the schismatics do," (meaning the *Novatians*,) "who, deriding the Church, and rebelling against peace and unity, are bold to constitute an [episcopal] chair, and assume to themselves a primacy, [an episcopal authority,] and *a power of baptizing, and offering*," that is, of celebrating the holy Eucharist.[k] More testimonies might be produced, but surely they are needless.

h *Ep.* 73. i *Conc. Carth.* Suff. 17. k *Ep.* 69.

And now, having made it fully appear, that a Bishop in St. Cyprian's time presided over many Presbyters and numerous congregations—that he was raised *to the top of the priesthood*, as the pious Bishop expressed himself, by a *new* ordination, his orders to the presbyterate being insufficient—that he had the sole power of ordaining and confirming, and the supreme power of the keys, no Presbyter having the right to administer the sacraments but in subordination to him; it follows irresistibly, and beyond the least possibility of a reply, that a Bishop, in the third century, was superior in *dignity*, in *power*, in *order*, to a Presbyter. I have now nothing more to do, but to show that St. Cyprian and his contemporaries did believe this superiority of Bishops to be by *divine institution*. But with this I shall begin my next letter.

LETTER V.

REV. SIR:

I AM now to show, that St. Cyprian and his contemporaries, believed that episcopacy, which has been fully proved to be *diocesan*, is *a divine* institution. One may fill a volume with testimonies to this purpose. Let a few suffice.

Cyprian, in his address to *Fortunatus*, says, that "the people are *by* GOD *committed* to the Bishop's care."[a] In his discourse at the opening of the council at Carthage, he says, "that our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and he alone, has power of setting Bishops over the Church to govern it." He says to *Cornelius*, that "if the courage of Bishops be shaken, and they shall yield to the temerity of wicked schismatics, there will then be an end of the episcopal authority, and the sublime and *divine power* of governing the Church."[b] And in the same epistle, he says, that "CHRIST *constitutes*, as well as protects Bishops." In his Epistle to *Florentius Pupianus*, he says, that "it is GOD that makes Bishops," and that "it is *by the divine appointment* a Bishop is set over the Church."[c] This, Sir, is but a small part of what might be produced; but I think it is quite sufficient to prove, that *Cyprian* believed episcopacy to be a *divine* institution.

Let us now see what his contemporaries say. In the council of Carthage, which was holden in the year 256, Fortunatus a Thuchabori, Venantius a Tinisa, and Clarus a Muscula, expressly say, that "our LORD left the care of his spouse to the Bishops." And we may reasonably believe, that all the other Bishops of the council were of the same opinion with these three, and with St. Cyprian, their president; especially when we con-

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a *De Exhort. Martyr.* p. 167. b *Ep.* 59. c *Ep.* 66.

sider, that it is fully attested by other African Synods, as appears from their synodical epistles. Thus: the 57th among St. Cyprian's, is a synodical epistle, written by forty Bishops, in the year 252. In that, they consider themselves as CHRIST's *Generals*, having *a commission from heaven* to animate his soldiers under their command—as "the pastors to whom the sheep are entrusted by the chief shepherd." The 61st seems to be another synodical epistle, congratulating *Lucius* upon his return to the see of Rome. In that, we have Bishops of *divine ordination*. The 67th was written by thirty-seven Bishops, giving their resolution of the case proposed to them, concerning *Martialis* and *Basilides*, two Spanish Bishops, who had lapsed in the persecution. Now the *divine* right of episcopacy runs through the whole epistle. I will not give you the contents of it, but refer you to the epistle itself for your satisfaction. The 70th is another synodical epistle, signed by thirty-two Bishops, in which they expressly say, that "it was by the divine vouchsafement, that they administered GOD's priesthood in his Church." The 72d is another synodical epistle, written to Stephen, Bishop of Rome, in which it is expressly affirmed, that the episcopal authority is of *divine appointment;* and that the *one altar*, (which is a figure for the Bishop's communion,) is *divine;* and that the setting up of *other altars* in opposition to it, or independant on it, is to counteract a *divine ordinance*. Nothing can be more expressive of the belief of that council.

Here, then, we have the opinion of, perhaps, all the Bishops, certainly of a great majority of them, in Mauritania and Numidia, that episcopacy is a *divine* institution; and, I think, nobody can, with any show of reason, doubt, that they were full as able to give a correct opinion upon this subject as the same number of our adversaries are in the present day. Had they given an opinion upon a point of doctrine, we should not be under any obligation to acquiesce in it, unless it was well supported by Scripture proof, upon sound principles of interpretation; but here is an opinion concerning a matter of fact, which is the same as a testimony to that fact, that CHRIST, by his Apostles, did appoint an order of ministers in his Church, superior to Presbyters; and to that order was committed the government, in all spiritual matters, of both ministers and people.

To these testimonies from the African Bishops, may be added those of Cornelius, the clergy, and the people of Rome. Let us begin with the testimony of those Roman confessors, who had joined in the schism of Novatianus, but soon became sensible of their fault, and returned to the communion of the Church. Cornelius, satisfied of the sincerity of their penitence, convenes his Presbyters, before whom the associates of Novatianus make the following confession: "We know that Cornelius is chosen Bishop of this most holy catholic Church, by the Omnipotent GOD and by our LORD CHRIST: we confess our error. We have been imposed upon—we have been abused by treachery

and ensnaring talk. For we are not ignorant that there is one God, and one Lord Christ, whom we have confessed, and one Holy Ghost; and that there ought to be but one Bishop in a catholic Church."[d] This, also, was the belief of Cornelius, and all his clergy. We might fairly judge so, had we no particular evidence to the purpose; but we need not depend upon conjecture, however reasonable—we have their positive testimony. Cornelius, in one of his epistles to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, as recorded by Eusebius,[e] says expressly, that "Novatianus usurped, and by force seized the bishopric, when it was not given him from above." And the Roman Presbyters and Deacons were as fully persuaded, that episcopacy was a divine institution. This appears from two letters written to St. Cyprian, during the vacancy in the see of Rome. In the one, having told him how far they had proceeded in the case of the lapsers, they say, that they can proceed no farther, till God shall give them a Bishop.[f] In the other, their belief is fairly intimated. They tell St. Cyprian, how much his vigour in the administration of his episcopal office, agreeably to the evangelical discipline, comforted them amidst their great pressures.[g] And, with respect to the lapsers, they say, their best course would be "to excite the clemency of God by submission, and draw upon themselves the divine mercy, by giving due honour to God's priest," that is, the Bishop. Thus we have the sentiments of the Bishop and clergy of the Church of Rome, when she was as pure a Church as any upon earth.

Another testimony to this purpose, is that of Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem. It was the general belief of that time, as we learn from Eusebius, that Alexander was made Bishop of that city by extraordinary designation. The historian says,[h] it was God's special care for his Church that did it: that there was something peculiar to God in the matter. Alexander himself believed it; he must, therefore, have believed the episcopal office to be of divine appointment. This appears, also, from his congratulatory epistle to the Church of Antioch, when Asclepiades was promoted to the chair of that diocese. He tells them, that "his bonds turned light and easy to him, when he heard that such an excellent person was made their Bishop, by the special favour of God."[i] How, after this, can it be supposed, that Alexander did not believe that episcopacy was a divine institution?

Alexander was as well qualified as any man then living, to determine what was the government of the Church in the apostolic age. It was about the year 212 that he was made coadjutor to Narcissus in the see of Jerusalem. Narcissus was, at that time, aged 116 years, and, consequently, was born before the death of St. John. Alexander, then, must have had it from

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d *Ep.* 49. p. 92, 93.
e Euseb. *Hist.* lib. vi. c. 43.
f *Ep.* 30.
g *Ep.* 36.
h *Eccles. Hist.* lib. vi. p. 268.
i Ibid.

the mouth of Narcissus, what the government of the Church was in the very age of the Apostles. I cannot conceive any thing more to the point, than the testimony of such a man.

The next person that I shall quote, as maintaining this opinion, was the learned Origen. He was born in the year 186, and for talents and literary acquirements, was not surpassed, if equalled, by any one in his day. According to Jerome,[k] who was an excellent judge of literary merit, Origen was master of all the learning then existing, and thoroughly versed in the principles of the different sects of Grecian philosophers. This kind of knowledge, it must be confessed, led him astray from the simplicity of the Gospel. He maintained some tenets that were pretty generally condemned; but still, he was a great and illustrious man.

This man, distinguished for his talents, learning, virtue, and piety, is entirely on our side of the question. He must have known perfectly well what was the government of the Church, not only in the early part of the third century, but also in the second, and at a very early period of it too; for his father, Leonidas, who was a martyr to Christianity, and who was converted from Gentilism not many years after the death of the Apostle John, would not, we may be sure, fail to instruct him upon that subject. With such an advantage and with such talents for research, Origen could have been at no loss to trace episcopacy to its very source. In him, we find no hint of ministerial parity, no hint of a change of government. He speaks exactly as we do. Let us hear him.

In his twentieth Homily on St. Luke, he has these words: "If JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, is subject to Joseph and Mary, shall not I be subject to the Bishop, who is of GOD *ordained* to be my father? Shall not I be subject to the Presbyter, who, by the divine vouchsafement, is set over me?" Here, the Bishop, as distinguished from the Presbyter, is said to be *ordained by* GOD; the Presbyter also, according to him, holds a divine commission; and this we most readily grant, and contend for. Again: In his book upon the subject of prayer, discoursing on the debts mentioned in the LORD's prayer, after he has named the duties common to all Christians, he adds—"Besides these, there is a debt peculiar to such as are widows maintained by the Church. And there is a debt peculiar to Deacons, and another peculiar to Presbyters; but of all these peculiar debts, that which is due by the Bishop is the greatest. It is exacted by the SAVIOUR of the whole Church; and the Bishop must suffer severely for it, if it be not paid."[l] More might be extracted from Origen, but surely this is quite enough.

I shall now conclude the testimonies of this century, with a few extracts from the *Apostolical Canons*. These, you are

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k *Catalog. Eccles. Scriptor.* l See PEARSON, *Vind. Ignat. Epist.* c. 11.

pleased to say, are an "*impudent forgery.*" If your meaning be, that these Canons were not made by the Apostles, you mean no more than what we are willing to allow. We say the same thing. But if you mean to assert, that they were not compiled till a late age of the Church, say the fifth or sixth century, you stand condemned by almost all the *learned. Daille* contended that they were not compiled till the fifth century; but he has been completely refuted by Bishop Beveridge. Even *Blondel*, who had no more reason to be pleased with those Canons than you have, acknowledges, that they were published as early as the year 280. This is too late, but let it be so. They will then bear complete testimony to the practice of the Church, in the third century.

I do not introduce the subject of these Canons, because I stand in need of their assistance; but to show that you are *incautious* in calling them an "*impudent forgery,*" unless you mean as already explained. I also wish to have an opportunity of giving our readers a summary view of Beveridge's able Defence of these Canons. I cannot possibly suppose that you have ever read that Defence; for then, I must think, that you would have been more modest in giving your opinion. Dogmatical assertions, I can assure you, Sir, will not do with us. Every thing must be brought to the test of fact, reason, and sound criticism. Let us see now, whether those Canons can be defended upon these solid grounds.

Bishop Beveridge, in his able defence, which is published in Cotelerius' Apostolical Fathers, maintains this opinion, that the Canons now in question, are the decrees of synods in the second and third centuries, collected at different times, and by different persons. This he proves from the testimonies of Athanasius and Basil of the fourth century, and from the decrees of several councils of that age. 1. The *Nicene council.* He shows that the 9th, 10th, 15th, and 16th Canons of that council, are transcripts of the 14th 15th, 61st, and 62d of the *Apostolical* Canons. But it may be said, that, perhaps, the *latter* are transcripts of the *former*. This *supposition* he entirely destroys, by showing, that the style of the Apostolical, is more simple than that of the Nicene Canons; and from that circumstance, which is generally admitted by sound critics, he infers the earlier date of the *former*. But what decisively proves it to be so, is, that the word "Metropolitan," was first used by the Nicene Council, and is never to be found in the Apostolic Canons: that *dignity*, indeed, that "*primus inter pares*" is to be found there, but not the title "Metropolitan." And let me add, what he has not observed, that the testimony of Athanasius and Basil proves the greater antiquity of the Apostolical Canons; for if they were transcripts, in the instances mentioned, of the Nicene Canons, those writers could not possibly have been ignorant of it. The Bishop next proves the superior antiquity, of the *Apostolic* Canons, from those of the council of Antioch. That council met in the year 341, sixteen years after that of Nice.

He gives the following view of the corresponding canons—corresponding not only in the matter, but nearly in the words.

Canons of Antioch.	Apostolical.	Canons of Antioch.	Apostolical.
1	7	12, 13	35
2	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	17, 18	36
3	15, 16	20	27
4	28	21	14
5	31	23	76
6	32	24	40
7, 8	33	25	41
9	34		

The Bishop proves also, that the Apostolical Canons were published before the fourth century, from the canons of the councils of Gangræna, Constantinople, Carthage, and Ephesus, which were holden in that century. Further: After observing, that the Apostolical Canons were sometimes styled Ecclesiastical, he adduces proofs from a number of writers in the fourth and fifth centuries, in favour of our side of this question. 1. From a letter written by Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, to Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople, which letter is preserved in the Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret. That letter was written before the meeting of the Nicene council. The Apostolical Canons are particularly named, and a reference evidently made to the 12th Canon. You have the Greek of both Canons translated into Latin, at the bottom of the page.[m]

The Bishop quotes in favour of his point, a testimony from the emperor Constantine, preserved by Eusebius; and in the fifth century the testimony of the emperor Theodosius; and in the beginning of the sixth, that of the learned emperor Justinian, that of John, Bishop of Antioch, and also the testimonies of the synod of Trullo, and of the second Nicene *council*. Thus, abundance of evidence has been given to prove, that the Apostolical Canons are of very high antiquity; published, at the lowest, in the third century; and are an exact representation of the government, rules, and practices of the primitive Church, in the second and third ages. And now, I leave our readers to judge, whether you were prudent in pronouncing them to be an "impudent forgery."

As to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, I shall not concern myself about them, because they were not published till after the time when all acknowledge that diocesan episcopacy prevailed. But I shall make use of the Apostolical Canons, to which I have

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m Unde fit ut nonnulli literis eorum subscribentes, in ecclesiam eos recipiant, cum tamen comministris nostris, qui hoc ausi sunt, gravissima, ut opinor, reprehensioni immineat infamia, eo quod nec Apostolicus canon id permittit. Apud THEOD. *Eccles. Hist.* lib. i. c. 14.

Apost. Can. 12th runs thus.—Si quis Clericus vel Laicus segregatus, vel non recipiendus, discedens in altera urbe receptus fuerit absque literis commendatitiis, segregetur et qui receptus est.

an unquestionable right, till you refute Bishop Beveridge's masterly defence of them.

"Canon 1. Let a Bishop be consecrated by two or three Bishops. Canon 2. Let a Presbyter and Deacon be ordained by one Bishop." Here the power of ordination is lodged in one person, the Bishop, and not in the presbytery. "Canon 15. If any Presbyter or Deacon shall leave his own parish, and go to another, without the Bishop's leave, he shall officiate no longer; especially, if he obey not the Bishop when he exhorts him to return, persisting in his insolence and disorderly behaviour; but he shall be reduced to communicate only as a layman." "Canon 32. If any Presbyter, despising his own Bishop, shall gather congregations apart, and erect another altar, his Bishop not being convicted of wickedness or irreligion; let him be deposed as an ambitious person: and likewise, such other clergy, or laity, who shall join themselves to him, shall be excommunicated." "Canon 39. Let the Presbyters or Deacons do nothing without the consent of the Bishop." This is in perfect conformity with the injunction of Ignatius.

"Canon 55. If any clergyman shall reproach or revile his Bishop, let him be deposed; for 'thou shall not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.' Exod. xxii. 28."—The same distinction of offices runs through all these canons.

And now, Sir, I may safely assert, that if any matter of fact is capable of being proved; if any matter of fact has actually been proved; it is, that *diocesan* episcopacy was the government of the Church in the third century.

We are now prepared to examine what you have to oppose to this great mass of clear, decisive, uncontrovertible evidence.

First: You quote a passage from St. Cyprian's third epistle, "whence we understand that it is lawful for none but the *Presidents* of the Church to baptize and grant remission of sins." Pray, Sir, are not the Bishops *Presidents* of the Churches which they govern? Can any title be more appropriate? Do they not *preside* in all conventions of their clergy? You certainly could not be in earnest when you quoted this passage! Your argument stands unparalleled for logical accuracy. I have tried, for some time, to make a syllogism of it: I believe I have succeeded at last. It will run thus:

A diocesan Bishop presides over both the clergy and laity of all the churches within his diocese.

A Presbyterian president presides over no clergy, but only over the laity of one congregation.

Therefore, a Presbyterian president and diocesan Bishop are the same officers.

I have not skill enough to determine to what mood and figure this syllogism belongs; but perhaps you, Sir, can settle the point.

But if you could possibly have been at any loss what kind of president Cyprian means, had you read a little farther in the epistle, you could easily have satisfied yourself. It was that kind

of *president* who administered *confirmation.* Speaking of Peter and John, who confirmed the disciples at Samaria, Cyprian observes: "This is our practice, with regard to such persons as are baptized in our church; who are brought before the presidents, and so, by our prayer and imposition of hands, receive the HOLY GHOST." This has been proved from Cyprian to be the prerogative of diocesan Bishops. St. Jerome also tells you so; and founds that prerogative upon the holy Scriptures. I hope you will not dispute *his* authority, whose soever else you may.

You go on, Ep. 67.—"The people should not flatter themselves that they are free from fault when they communicate with a sinful priest, and give their consent to the presidency of a wicked Bishop," &c. I omit the remainder of the quotation because it is long, and amounts to nothing more than this, that Cyprian calls a Bishop a priest three or four times. Well, Sir, I hope you do not mean to deny that a Bishop is of the *sacerdotal* order; but if you mean to infer from that, that he is on a level with a Presbyter, I should not much applaud the correctness of your inference. Aaron the High Priest is called a priest, repeatedly; indeed, most commonly; therefore, Aaron was no High Priest. Strange logic!

It appears to me to be a total waste of time to reply to such—what shall I call them?—*nothings.*

You should, Sir, have told your "Christian brethren" that the epistle from which you made your extract was a *synodical* one, written by thirty-seven Bishops, and not a Presbyter among them, upon a very important occasion—the lapse of two Spanish Bishops, Basilides and Martialis; and that it was addressed "to their brethren in the LORD, the Presbyter Felix, and to the people dwelling at Legio and Asturica, as likewise to the Deacon Lælius, and to the people dwelling at Emerita." You should have told them this, and then, perhaps, they could have determined whether, after such an enumeration of the orders of the Church, a Bishop's being called a priest proves him not to hold the highest grade in the priesthood—*sacerdotii fastigium*—which very expression would settle the point, were there not a hundred other considerations to put it beyond the possibility of doubt.

But you have given your readers this quotation, principally, I presume, to show, that in the time of Cyprian, a Bishop was chosen by the people; and thence you infer, in the face of complete evidence to the contrary, that a Bishop presided over no more than a single congregation. But whether your premise be true or not, the inference has no necessary connexion with it. A Bishop may be chosen by the people, and yet he may preside over a hundred congregations. I shall not, therefore, enter into the dispute about the mode of electing a Bishop, but refer you to the *Vindication of the Principles of the Cyprianic age,*[a] in which you will find a complete refutation of the notion,

a. From p. 392 to 436.

that, in that age, a Bishop was elected by the people. The author demonstrates, that the people had no other concern in the business than to bear testimony to the character of the Bishop elect, and that the election was made by the Bishops of the province, without any thing like a polling on the part of the people. In the next age after Christianity was established, I allow that the people, in *some* places, assumed the power of electing the Bishop; but the effects of it became so dreadful, particularly at Rome, that the emperor found it absolutely necessary to deprive them of that power.

Your next quotation does really surprise me. I do not know what to think—what to make of your management of this controversy. Mr. M'Leod, I thought, deserved to stand first on the list of writers who quote texts of Scripture that have no more connexion with the subject than with the doctrine of the *transmigration of souls;* but you not only quote authorities that do not make for *your* purpose, but that are directly in point to *ours*. Thus, *Ep.* 32.—"Through all the vicissitudes of time, the ordination of Bishops and the constitution of the Church are so handed down, that the Church is built on the Bishops, and every act of the Church is ordered and managed by them. Seeing, therefore, this is founded on the law of God, I wonder that some should be so rash and insolent as to write to me in the name of the Church, seeing a Church consists of a Bishop, clergy, and all that stand faithful"—that is, a Church, let the number of congregations of which it may be composed be ever so many, must be under the presidency of a Bishop with his clergy, otherwise it is no Church. And is this *parochial* episcopacy?

But I suppose your design was to show your readers that the mode of expression, a *Church*, not *churches*, implied no more than a single congregation, and then the Bishop would be snugly seated at the head of it. But what use would there be of a number of clergymen to a single congregation? Of forty-six, for instance, at Rome? Of eight, at least, at Carthage? "Why, some of these were *ruling* Elders." What! some of these clergymen! Remember, that Cyprian uses the word *clergy*—*clericos*. But your *ruling Elders*, by your own account, are not clergymen. In short, there is not a shadow of proof that there were any such creatures at Rome or Carthage.

Besides, when *the Church* of a city is spoken of, it is always mentioned, throughout the Scriptures, in the singular number, let the number of congregations be ever so many; but when the Churches of a whole province are mentioned, it is always in the plural number. Thus, *the* Church of Jerusalem—*the* Church of Antioch—*the* Church of Sardis—*the* Church of Ephesus—*the* Church of Pergamus; but when of a whole province, it is the Churches of Judea—the Churches of Asia—the Churches of Syria and Cilicia—the Churches of Galatia—the Churches of Macedonia—just as many Churches as there were cities, in

which were Bishops presiding over clergy and laity, let their numbers be ever so great. And we have uncontrollable evidence from antiquity, that as Christians multiplied in the neighbouring towns and villages, they were all annexed to the Bishop of the city, as far as the civil jurisdiction of that city extended.

Your next quotation is from *Tract. de Unitat. Eccles.* "Our LORD speaks to Peter, *I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church*, &c. Upon one he builds his Church; and though he gave an equal power to all his Apostles, yet that he might manifest unity, he ordered the beginning of that unity to proceed from one person. The rest of the Apostles were the *same* that Peter was, being endued with the same *both of honour and power*. But the beginning proceeds from unity, that the Church may be shown to be one." Well, Sir, what is to be deduced from all this? That Cyprian considered Bishops and *preaching* Presbyters as of the *same order?* The only distinction between them, you say, is that "of *president* or *chairman* among them." Now, Sir, if I have not demolished this notion of *parity* by the evidence I have given, that a Presbyter was raised to the episcopate by a *new* ordination; that, in consequence he presided over all orders and ranks in the Church—that he had the *sole* power of ordination—the *sole* power of confirmation—that he had the *supremacy* of the keys—that none could baptize, or administer the Eucharist, or absolve penitents, that is, restore them to the communion of the Church, without his authority; if, I say, I have not demolished the notion of parity by the evidence I have produced for these points, then it is impossible to prove any thing that does not admit of mathematical demonstration. History of every kind must be given up; no facts that have not occurred under our own eyes can be substantiated; we may talk of past events, and of forms of governments in days of yore, but they are all dreams—fictions of the fancy, which no sober man will ever believe. Nay, our very Bible must be given up; for we know not, upon this principle, who wrote it, nor when it was written, nor when the parts were compiled into one Sacred Canon; nor do we know that there were any miracles ever wrought, nor that any prophecies were uttered. But I hope there are many who will not subscribe to this extravagance; who will be convinced from the evidence adduced, that Cyprian held no such opinion as you ascribe to him.

The quotation that you have given us does not convey the least hint of parity between Bishops and Presbyters; but it positively asserts an equality, both in *honour* and *power*, between Peter and the rest of the Apostles. They were all perfectly equal; and, as Cyprian repeatedly asserts, that Bishops are the *successors* of the Apostles, it follows, with strict logical propriety, that there is not, as he speaks, any *Bishop of Bishops*. This is the very argument which Cyprian uses to prove, that the Bishops of Rome had not the least authority over other Bishops;

and nothing could be more to his purpose. It is the very argument which Protestant Episcopalians use to demolish the *Pope's supremacy*. But it seems you are content, if you can get any shadow of argument against us, to allow Peter some superiority over the other Apostles. He must be, at least, the *president* or *chairman* of the apostolic presbytery, according to your mode of reasoning; for unless he be, he can be no type of the Bishop, who, you say, is the *president* or *chairman* among his clergy. This must be the point of similitude, otherwise there is none at all. But what, Sir, put it into your mind, that Peter was the *chairman* of the apostolic college? Did Cyprian? No hint of that sort in him. Do the other fathers of the first three centuries say so? Nothing like it. Do the Scriptures? He must be sharp sighted that can find it. Does it appear to be so from the account we have of the council of Jerusalem? Quite otherwise. St. James appears to have been the president of that council; and for no other reason, that we can conceive, but his being Bishop of that city. What, then, can be the ground of this notion? Is it the circumstance of his receiving his commission before the other Apostles? Cyprian knew that he did so; but, notwithstanding, he asserts the equality of the other Apostles. All the use he makes of that circumstance is by way of *illustration*, not of *strict reasoning*. He does not infer from it Peter's superiority, but uses it merely as a circumstance illustrative of the unity of the Church. This liberty of alluding to texts of Scripture, from which no conclusive proof is intended, was very common among the fathers, and Cyprian very frequently uses it. He evidently proceeds here upon an allusion to the *singular* number, because CHRIST commissioned Peter in the first instance; but in his 33d epistle he expressly asserts, that the Church is founded upon Bishops, in the *plural* number. After citing Peter's commission, he says, "From thence, in a regular succession downwards, we date the ordination of Bishops, and the course of ecclesiastical administrations, so as that we understand the Church to be settled upon her Bishops, and every public act of hers to be managed by them." Now, Sir, is it not really very weak to infer from a mere *fanciful* allusion to the singular number, in order to give some sort of illustration to the principle that the Church is but *one*, that Peter was at the head of the apostolic college, as a *primus inter pares*, [first among equals,] and that, therefore, a Bishop is no more in the presbytery? This inference is altogether gratuitous, and the premise, from a *Protestant*, is perfectly astonishing. I am sorry to find, Sir, that you reason, or make Cyprian reason, precisely as the Papists do, with respect to Peter. I am sorry to perceive this glance at Rome. *Principiis obsta* [resist beginnings] is a wise maxim. I hope we shall all be governed by it.[o]

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o See Dr. M.'s third *Letter*, p. 79. The note at the bottom of the page savours pretty strongly of the *old leaven*.

You appear to me, Sir, to be apprehensive that your inference is not very tenable; and for that reason, I suppose it is, that you have pressed Dodwell into your service. That learned man, you inform us, 'makes Peter the type of every Bishop, and the rest of the Apostles the type of every Presbyter.' I am really astonished, and to tell you the truth, not a little displeased at your method of quoting authors. Am I to look through all the works of Dodwell for what you ascribe to him? If you took the quotation immediately from him, (which I very much doubt,) why did you not note the book and the page? Surely it was very easy to do it. Whatever, Sir, you may think of the matter, I believe every candid reader will agree with me, that you are not entitled to any answer when you quote in this manner. However, as my patience is not yet exhausted, I have carefully looked into those writings of Dodwell which are in my hands. These, I acknowledge, are not all his writings. I have none but his *Cyprianic Dissertations*, his book *on Schism*, and his *Reply to Baxter*. I have also, his Life, by Brokesby. In that, I see nothing for your purpose; but I found in it, what I thought a probable clue to your quotation. I immediately turned to Dodwell's seventh *Cyprianic Dissertation*, in which he reasons strenuously against the Papists, who found the supremacy of the Pope upon the commission given to Peter. By consulting that Dissertation, I found that you had not fairly represented Dodwell's sentiments upon that point. He asserts, that the declaration of CHRIST to Peter, in consequence of the noble confession he had made, did confer a particular honour upon him, but no degree of power or authority above the other Apostles—that they were all equal by their commission; but that he, *ut inter pares, unus tamen reliquis emineret*—that is, that he, as an equal in power, shone with superior splendour. He further thinks, as Cyprian does, that our SAVIOUR's declaration to Peter, prior to his commissioning the other Apostles, was a circumstance intended to point out the unity of the Church—*non id cine certo arcanoque consilio a Servatore esse factum.* But he argues strenuously against the Papists, for founding the Pope's supremacy upon this honorary circumstance. He shows, that all the Apostles were invested with equal authority, and that there is *no Bishop of Bishops*, as Cyprian speaks. He maintains, that as *unity* began with Peter, so it was afterwards extended to the whole college of Apostles, to whom the Bishops succeeded, and became the principle of unity to the whole Church. He asserts, that as *unity* began with *one*, that is, with Peter, so it is continued with *one*, that is, with the *one* Bishop of a diocese. In this respect, he thinks Peter was a type of every Bishop; but he no where says, that the Bishop was no more than *primus inter pares*, or, that the rest of the Apostles were types of the Presbyters. He does not mention the Presbyters at all, nor give the least hint that he thought them equal, either in order or in degree, with the Bishop. Nor indeed could he, without the

most palpable inconsistency. His well known doctrine is, that the Bishops *are* in the *Christian* what the High Priest *was* in the *Jewish* Church; and that the Presbyters of the *former* correspond with the Priests of the *latter*. He maintains, that Bishops are of a superior order to Presbyters, by being invested with the sole power of ordination and confirmation, and with a supremacy in the government of the Church; and that this superiority is by *divine institution*. That this was Dodwell's doctrine, you will soon be convinced, if you will look into his *Cyprianic Dissertations*, and his *Discourse concerning the one Priesthood and the one Altar*. I will give you one quotation from the latter, without subjecting you to the trouble of reading almost the whole book before you find it. It is near the close, p. 388. "Is not," says he, "the Bishop as apt as ever to signify a principle of unity, and to represent GOD and CHRIST under the notion of a *head?* Nay, does not his Monarchical Presidency over his brethren of the clergy, peculiarly fit him for such a signification? And does he not the more naturally represent GOD and CHRIST in the notion of a head, by how much he is more like in their monarchy, I mean over that particular body, over which Bishops were at first placed by *divine institution?* Or do they think them less of divine institution *now* than *formerly?*" I refer you also to the 9th chapter of the same book, the title of which is, "The Christian Bishops were answerable to the Jewish High Priests."

We have, for the present, said enough about Dodwell; and, from what has been said, it will, I think, appear to every impartial reader, that you have either taken what you have ascribed to him, upon trust; or if you have read any of his works, that you have greatly mistaken his meaning, and consequently, greatly misrepresented him.

Your next and last quotation from Cyprian is as much in your favour as the preceding. *Ep.* 3. "The Deacons ought to remember, that the LORD hath chosen Apostles, that is, Bishops and Presidents; but the Apostles constituted Deacons, as the ministers of their episcopacy and of the Church."

Now, I think it would puzzle any man living to perceive in this passage the least appearance of Presbyterian parity. Where does it lie? In what words? In what circumstance? In what intimation? I am totally at a loss to perceive it; but I am at no loss to perceive, that Cyprian makes the Bishops the successors of the Apostles, and episcopacy, such as he himself held, to be of *divine* institution. I can also perceive, by reading a little farther on, that Cyprian says, "You will make very proper use of your episcopal authority, either by deposing or excommunicating him, [the Deacon complained of,] as you shall find most expedient." This, Rogatianus, to whom the epistle was addressed, could do by virtue of his episcopal authority. He did not want the aid of the people, nor of *ruling Elders*, nor even of *preaching* Elders. He could do it alone, if he thought proper. This, I think, looks very much like episcopal pre-eminence.

You sum up the evidence, which the preceding quotations afford against diocesan episcopacy, in the following triumphant manner: 'These extracts are remarkable. Though they are precisely those which Episcopalians generally adduce from Cyprian in support of their cause, the discerning reader [the *discerning!* Aye—there lies the emphasis] will perceive, that all their force lies against that cause.' Now, Sir, I do not perceive, that, in the great mass of evidence which I have given for diocesan episcopacy, I have made use of one of these extracts; although I might have used them all with propriety. Your intimation, therefore, that these extracts are the only or the principal dependance of Episcopalians, shows, either that you do not know what we have to say, or, that knowing it, you were not ingenious enough to produce it. I suppose the first part of the alternative to be the truth; for, I never will admit any thing that bears hard upon your integrity. And what a strange thing is it, for a man to undertake a controversy, when he does not know the whole of the evidence his opponents can bring against him! Even the great number of quotations that I have made, and which are so pointed, so uncontrollable, are not a quarter part of what I might have made; and there is also a variety of topics from which powerful arguments might be raised, such as no man ever *has*, or ever *can* answer, that I have entirely omitted, merely for the sake of brevity. But whoever wishes to see them handled in a masterly manner, may consult Bishop Sage's *Cyprianic Age*, and the *Vindication* of it.

You go on: "It is evident from the extracts, that *Bishop* and *President* are used by this Father as words of the same import." So we say too—the Bishop, presiding over both clergy and people. A Presbyter, also, *may* be styled *President*, in an inferior sense, as he presides over his own congregation. But Cyprian, I believe, generally uses the word *Prepositus*, President, to signify a Bishop. And what a curious circumstance it is, to make this an argument against *diocesan* episcopacy, without first proving that *parochial* was the government of the Church! Whichsoever was the fact, the appellations *Bishop* and *President* must be understood accordingly.

You proceed: 'The officer thus denominated, was the only one who had the power of administering baptism.' There is nothing that looks like *that* in all the writings of Cyprian. His doctrine was perfectly the same with that of Ignatius—that the Bishop had the *chief*, but not the *sole* power of the keys. None could baptize and administer the Eucharist, without his authority. This is every where apparent in Cyprian; and this *superior* power of the keys, upon which all discipline is founded, is an invincible argument against *parity*; and, as such, I have urged it in this controversy.

But as there is nothing like matter of fact, to convince the generality of readers, I would observe, that Tertullian, who had been a Presbyter of the Church of Carthage some years before

Cyprian, says, that Deacons had a right to baptize, when given them by the Bishop. Now, we may be sure from this testimony, that this was the fact in that Church; and, consequently, that the Bishop's power of the keys was not *sole*, but *supreme*.

Further you say: 'The Bishop in Cyprian's days was chosen by the people of his charge.' If he were, it does not at all affect diocesan episcopacy; but, as I have already observed, try your hand upon Bishop Sage, who has pretty amply discussed that point. The Bishop 'was ordained over a *particular flock*.' You mean over a *single* congregation. The contrary has been demonstrated—'And received his ordination in the *presence of that flock*.' That might very well be—all that chose, attended, no doubt; and those who did, received every possible accommodation. In no other sense can we conceive, that a Bishop was ordained in the presence of his flock, when that flock consisted of many thousands, as I have fully proved was the case at Carthage.

Your other inferences are so much of a piece with the foregoing, that it is not worth while to consider them. Let our readers compare them with the proofs I have given, that diocesan episcopacy was the government of the Church in the third century, and then judge for themselves. I am perfectly willing to leave the decision to every impartial mind.

I shall just notice, before I conclude this letter, your unfounded assertion, that Cyprian repeatedly calls Presbyters his *colleagues*. Now, Sir, I, on the contrary, assert, that he never *once* calls them his colleagues. He sometimes, indeed, calls them his *Fellow Presbyters*, and this is frequently done by Bishops in our day. The same condescending language is very common among military men. A General frequently addresses even common soldiers, in the familiar style of, *fellow-soldiers*. But how ridiculous would it be to infer from this, that the soldiers and their General are colleagues! Just so ridiculous is the inference, that Cyprian and his Presbyters were equal, because he sometimes calls them his *fellow-presbyters*. His colleagues he never calls them.

I will conclude this letter in the words of Dodwell. Speaking upon this point, he says, Cyprian appropriates the word *colleagues* to Bishops, and plainly intimates, that Presbyters were entirely excluded from that *college*.[p]

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p *Dissert. Cyp.* 10. p. 200. Et quidem ita propriam facit episcopis ut collegas presbyteris opponat, &c.

LETTER VI.

REV. SIR:

IN my last, I finished a pretty long list of testimonies from the writings of St. Cyprian, and proved, I am persuaded, beyond the possibility of refutation, that he and all his contemporaries did believe and assert the divine institution of episcopacy. I also considered three or four passages which you adduced from that father, to which you give a very surprising gloss, and which does not display your usual ingenuity; for episcopacy still shines in them, notwithstanding your efforts to obscure it. I shall now close the evidence from the Cyprianic period, by considering your quotation from Firmilian, Bishop of Cesarea.

In an epistle addressed to Cyprian, Firmilian thus speaks: "But the other heretics also, if they separate from the Church, can have no power, or grace, since all power and grace are placed in the Church, where *Elders* preside, in whom is vested the power of baptizing, and imposition of hands, and ordination." You add, 'this passage needs no comment. It not only represents the right to baptize, and the right to ordain, as going together; but it also expressly ascribes both to the *Elders* who preside in the Churches.'

'This needs no comment!' Concise enough, to be sure! But there are some of your readers, who will, I hope, venture to think for themselves. To such I address the following observations:

1. Firmilian was a very distinguished Bishop, and contemporary with Cyprian, from whose works we have extracted such a body of evidence, that Bishops, in his day, were an order superior to Presbyters, as cannot possibly be controlled. 2. Firmilian appears to have been perfectly of the same mind with Cyprian, in all matters relating to the discipline and government of the Church, as any one may see, who will read the whole of the 75th epistle. 3. Firmilian was the disciple of Origen; and we have seen that *he* asserted the divine institution of episcopacy. From these considerations we have strong ground to presume, that Firmilian had the same sentiments with respect to episcopacy that all his contemporaries had.

But what amounts to more than presumptive evidence, Firmilian, in this very letter, explains what he means by Elders. "How is this," says he, "that when we see Paul baptized his disciples again after John's baptism, we should make any doubt of baptizing them who return from heresy to the Church, after that unlawful and profane baptism of theirs, unless Paul was less than these Bishops of whom we are speaking now, that these, indeed, might give the HOLY GHOST by imposition of hands alone, but Paul was insufficient for it." Now we see of what kind of Elders Firmilian was speaking; it was expressly the

Bishops, to whom belonged the supreme power of baptism, confirmation, and ordination. It has been made as clear as any matter of fact can be made, that Bishops, in the age of Cyprian, were the supreme ministers of the sacraments, and the sole ministers of confirmation and ordination; and Firmilian's ascribing these powers to Elders, would prove decisively to every impartial person, that by them he meant Bishops, even if he had not said so himself; but when he calls those who were to lay their hands upon the returning heretics, by the appropriate name of Bishops, such Bishops as *he* and *Cyprian* were—there cannot be the shadow of a doubt remaining. And here let me add, that when the appellative Bishop is used by the writers of the third century, it is always used in the appropriate sense; and Presbyters are never called Bishops, as has been fully proved by Pearson and Dodwell.[q] I will give you another quotation from the 75th epistle, which will answer the double purpose of strengthening the above proofs, if they need it, and of showing Firmilian's coincidence of opinion with Cyprian and the other African Bishops, and with his master Origen, in regard to the divine institution of *diocesan* episcopacy. After showing from Scripture, that the Church was founded upon Peter and the other Apostles, he says, "where we may observe, that the power of remitting sins was granted to the Apostles, and to those Churches which they, when sent forth by CHRIST, formed and founded, and to those Bishops who *succeeded them in a due and regular course of vicarious* ordination. Under what other notion can we, therefore, consider these adversaries of the one Catholic Church, whereof we are members, these enemies of ours, of us I say, who are successors to the Apostles," &c. Here Firmilian declares himself, and Cyprian, and the other Bishops of his time —Bishops in the appropriate sense of the word—Bishops, who had many Presbyters and many congregations under them—Bishops, who had the supreme power of the keys, and the sole power of confirmation and ordination; he declares, I say, these *diocesan* Bishops to be the *successors of the Apostles*, holding by vicarious ordination, the very commission which they held; and then, by irresistible consequence, diocesan episcopacy is a divine institution. If any man can now doubt what sort of Presbyters or Elders Firmilian speaks of, all I have to say is, that he has the power of doubting entirely at his own disposal.

I am really, Sir, astonished, that such a man as you are, should give in to that puerility of catching at every passage of the ancient writers, in which Bishops are styled Presbyters, when you very well know, that the High Priest is generally styled Priest, and that a Bishop is a Presbyter, as the greater implies the less. If you can produce any passages from the writers of the third century, (I confine myself to that at present,) in which a Pres-

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q PEARSON'S *Dissert.* and DODWELL in *Pearson's Dissert. prima de Success. prim. R. Epis.* chap. ix. p. 97. 4to.

byter is styled Bishop, it would be something in your favour; but I believe you will search long enough for those passages.

I shall now close the testimonies of the third century with the usual quotations from Tertullian, who, as you justly observe, 'began to flourish about the year 200.' As he was converted to Christianity twenty-five years before that period, he is a good witness for the government of the Church, both in the beginning of the third century and in the latter part of the second. Let it also be remembered, that he was a Presbyter of the Church of Carthage, but never attained the episcopal dignity. He was greatly admired for his extensive learning, by St. Cyprian, who always called him his master. We may, therefore, very reasonably suppose, that Cyprian and he did not differ in the article of Church government. Towards the close of his life, indeed, he fell into the errors of the Montanists, and there the orthodox Bishop of Carthage left him.

The quotation which you have given from Tertullian, I claim for episcopacy. It has been proved from Origen, that, in the early part of the third century, diocesan episcopacy prevailed in the Church. Indeed, all the testimonies I have produced from the different writers of that age prove the same thing; for it is ridiculous to talk of any change a few years before those men lived, when they so positively, so repeatedly, and so unanimously, found episcopacy upon apostolic institution. Tertullian, we shall find, bears his testimony to the same thing, in the following passages: "The chief or highest Priest, who is the Bishop, has the right of giving baptism, and after him, the Presbyters and Deacons; but not without the Bishop's authority." Now, what would a man, who has no hypothesis to maintain, think and say of this passage? Certainly he would say—here, it is evident, that Tertullian speaks of an order, or grade, to which he gives the title of High Priest and Bishop, and which, of consequence, from the very title, must be possessed of powers superior, not only to those of the Deacon, but also of the Presbyter. And this is not only implied in the title, but the writer also gives an instance of the superiority of the Bishop, in ascribing to him, as its source, all the power which the inferior orders have to baptize; and the same must be true, also, of whatever other powers they are possessed. Now, if this be not the meaning of Tertullian, then I do declare, that I have not intellect enough to discover the meaning of as plain a passage as ever was written. This, too, is exactly the language, and precisely the sentiment of Cyprian and his contemporaries, as has been proved *ad satietatem*. They all ascribe to the Bishop the supremacy of the keys, or sacraments, and all the power which the inferior orders exercise in the Church; and the Bishop's power they ascribe to the apostolical commission, and that commission to CHRIST; and thus they make out the divine institution of episcopacy. And this, I aver, was the universal opinion, so far as the records of antiquity inform us, from the first foundation of the Christian Church; as I hope to make appear in due time.

Now, Sir, what have you to say to this quotation? Reader! hear it, and be astonished. 'The highest Priest might have been the *standing Moderator* of the Presbytery'—'*The standing Moderator!*' Whence did that language come? Not from the primitive Church, certainly. No; it came from *Geneva.* Pray, Sir, has a *Moderator* among you the supreme power of the keys? Do the members of your Presbytery derive the power of administering the sacraments from him? Can they not administer them but in subordination to him? How strikingly preposterous is it to suppose your *Moderator*, if he were even to hold his office for life, would answer to Tertullian's High Priest, or Bishop! All the essential traits of character in the *latter* are totally wanting in the *former*. This *conceit*, therefore, will answer no purpose but to excite contempt.

Another testimony from Tertullian, is the following: "Let us see what milk the Corinthians drew from Paul; by what rule the Galatians were reclaimed; what the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Ephesians read; what, likewise, our neighbour Romans say, to whom both Peter and Paul left the Gospel, sealed with their blood. We have, also, Churches founded by John;[r] for though Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, yet the order or succession of Bishops, when traced up to its original, will be found to have John for its author," in the Churches which he planted.

In this passage, Tertullian asserts that St. John founded Churches, and that he ordained Bishops for them—such Bishops as existed at the close of the second century—who were the high priests of the Church, the supreme dispensers of the sacraments, which even Presbyters could not administer without their authority, and in subordination to them; and who, consequently, were the supreme governors of the Churches. Such Bishops, and not that *modern manufacture, standing Moderators*, did St. John establish in all the Churches which he founded. If any thing can be more decisive than this, I know not what it is. Let it also be constantly kept in mind, that I have produced a chain of evidence for diocesan episcopacy, from the latter end of the fourth century, up to the beginning of the third, ending in Origen, and now continued into the second century, by Tertullian. No link in the chain, as yet, appears wanting. Tertullian's evidence is clearly of the same nature with that of Cyprian, and all his contemporaries; so that no cavils can possibly obscure it.

There is another consideration which the impartial inquirer should keep constantly in his mind—it is this, that all the testimonies hitherto produced, not only evince that diocesan episcopacy was the government of the Church when the authors wrote, but that it was so, in their opinion, from the very foundation of

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r Habemus et Joannis alumnas ecclesias: nam etsi Apocalypsim ejus Marcion respuit, ordines tamen episcoporum ad originem recensus, in Joannem stabit auctorem —l. 4. *adv. Marcion.*

Christianity; in short, that it was a divine institution. Let these considerations be kept in mind, I say, and it will greatly facilitate the perception of that truth we are in pursuit of.

The next quotation from Tertullian is of the same nature with the last. He challenges the heretics to "produce the originals of their Churches, and show the order of their Bishops so running down successively from the beginning, as that every first Bishop among them shall have had for his author and predecessor some one of the Apostles, or apostolical men who continued with the Apostles. For in this manner, the apostolic Churches bring down their registers; as the Church of Smyrna from Polycarp, placed there by John; the Church of Rome from Clement, ordained by Peter; and so do the rest prove their apostolical origin, by exhibiting those who were constituted their Bishops by the Apostles.[s] Here again we have episcopacy of apostolic institution; Bishops placed over the Churches by the Apostles themselves—not *standing Moderators*, but officers who had power *out* of the presbytery as well as in it; and *much more* power when *out* than *in*—not *Rectors* of parishes, with a tribe of useless curates about them; but those officers who authorized Presbyters to administer the sacraments, and, of consequence, to dispense the *word of life;* still controlling them in the exercise of those powers, and by these very circumstances keeping a rod of discipline over their heads, which we know they frequently applied to the disobedient, to the "punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of true religion and virtue." *These* were Tertullian's Bishops, and *these*, he tells us, were the Bishops established over the Churches by the Apostles.

We shall now find no difficulty in answering your objections, and showing their extreme weakness.

I. *Apol.* "In our religious assemblies," says Tertullian, "certain approved *Elders preside*, who have attained their office by merit and not by bribes." Again: *De Corona.* "We receive the sacrament of the LORD'S Supper from the hands of none but the *Presidents* of our assemblies." *Ibid.* "Before we go to the water to be baptized, we first, in the church, under the hand of the *President*, profess to renounce the devil." You, besides, inform us, that Tertullian says, the Christians where he resided, received the LORD'S Supper three times in every week. Your inferences from all these are, 'that Presbyter, President, and Bishop, are employed by Tertullian, as titles of the same import;' and that it was impossible for one man to perform all the baptisms, and administer the LORD'S Supper three times a week to all his flock. And 'to impossibility, absurdity is added, by supposing, as Episcopalians must, that the Bishop did all this when he had many Presbyters under him, who were all invested by the very nature of their office, with the power of administering both sacraments as well as himself.'[t] This, Sir, is *your* account

s TERTULLIAN *de præscript.* c. 32.
t *Letter* V. p. 170, 171, 172.

of the matter; and let you tell your own story, there *is* some little speciousness in it. But, perhaps, things are not exactly as you represent them. Let us give Tertullian a fair hearing.

But first I would observe, that it is upon *your* plan of government, not upon *ours*, that there are both 'impossibility' and 'absurdity.' According to that plan, the Bishop was the Rector, the Presbyters were his curates or assistants; for you allow preaching Presbyters as well as ruling Elders, to have generally been in the city churches. But unfortunately for you, all the Presbyters at Carthage administered the sacraments; so did those at Rome, as we find from the writings of Cyprian. At Rome, we know to a certainty, there were forty-six Presbyters; and not the shadow of a ruling Elder there. If, then, according to your interpretation of Tertullian, the Bishop, that is, the Rector, administered both sacraments with his own hands, and he alone; and that he administered one of them, the Eucharist, to thousands of Christians three times a week (for we know that there were thousands in that Church;) I beg to know how the impossibility of all this is removed by your plan. If the congregation at Carthage was but one, and that one congregation consisted of many thousands, then a single person could not possibly discharge all these duties; for you take care to interpret Tertullian in such a manner as to exclude the Presbyters from having any hand in the business. You say, expressly, 'the man who performed every baptism in the church under his care, and who administered the LORD'S Supper three times every week to all the members of his church, could only have been the pastor of one congregation.' And I say, even so, when that congregation consisted of many thousands, as I have proved it did at Carthage, he could not have discharged those duties without the aid of his Presbyters. And thus, 'impossibility' and 'absurdity' are fairly retorted upon you.

But, Sir, neither of these consequences has any connexion with the diocesan episcopacy, when you take Tertullian by the right handle. He says, "The Christians," in his time, "received the sacrament of the LORD'S Supper from the hands of the Presidents alone." Pray, Sir, how do you know that these Presidents were the *Bishops only?* Tertullian gives them no character which obliges us to confine ourselves to that sense. It is very certain, that Presbyters are Presidents over the particular congregations in which they officiate. We cannot, therefore, determine the meaning of the title without some distinctive characters, such as Firmilian gives to his presiding Elders—the characters of performing *confirmation*, and conferring *holy orders*, which settle the meaning of the title *presiding Elders*, without any farther comment.

But, Sir, to put this point beyond the possibility of a reply, let us consider the scope of the passage in Tertullian, relating to the LORD'S Supper. This I will do in the words of the author of *An original Draught of the Primitive Church*, &c. That excel-

lent writer observes, "Tertullian was contending for the authority of tradition for many common rites then used in the Christian Church, without a Scripture warrant for them. Amongst these customs, he instances a general practice in the Church *then* to communicate in the morning, different from the time of the institution itself;[u] and together with that, this which we are now speaking of, *that they received the communion from the President's hands alone;* both equally common in his days in the Christian Church; which, to make as clear an interpretation of it as we can, I think implies neither more nor less than this, that as the sacrament was then generally administered in the morning, so wherever it was administered, the consecrated elements were usually delivered to the communicants (as it is indeed most in use now) by the hands of them only who presided in the several assemblies where those holy exercises were performed; that is, I humbly conceive, by the officiating ministers themselves.[v] And what appearance of proof is there in all this, for a Bishop's personally distributing the blessed elements to every communicant in his whole diocese at one time and in one place? I desire the words and context may be sifted, and I should willingly sit down by the reader's judgment."[w]

But it may be asked, did not all adult catechumens profess, before baptism, to renounce the devil, the pomps, &c., in the presence of the Bishop? How does this accord with his being a *diocesan?* I answer, the word *antistes* does not necessarily imply a Bishop; but I will admit that it does; and I will farther concede, that the catechumens, at least those of the city churches, did generally make their profession of faith before the Bishop; but still, you will derive no advantage from it, for Tertullian informs us, that "it was a very large space of time which was set apart for this very ordering of baptism every year, even *the fifty days from Easter to Whitsuntide.*"[x] So that hundreds in that time, in a pretty large diocese, might have made this profession; and many of them, if not all, had it been necessary, might have been baptized too by him; but *that*, Tertullian does not say, and, therefore, you have no right to say so. All that he says, is, "that the Bishop hath a right of Baptism, [that is, the first, the chief right,] and then the Presbytery; but, for the honour of the Church, not without the Bishop's authority."

I have now, I think, taken a fair and pretty full view of Tertullian's testimonies; and I flatter myself that they will appear to every impartial mind, a continuation of that chain of evidence, which I am running up to the age of Apostles.

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u Eucharistiæ sacramentum, et in tempore victus, et omnibus mandatum a Domino, etiam antelucanis cœtibus, nec de aliorum manu, quam Presidentium sumimus. TERTUL. *de Corona*, p. 121.

v Whereas in many places (as Justin Martyr tells us) the Deacons used to do it.

w *Draught Prim. Church*, &c., p. 66, 67.

x Diem baptismo solennem pascha præstat exinde Pentecoste, ordinandis lavacris latissimum spatium est, quo et Domini resurrectio inter discipulos frequentata est. TERTUL. *de Bapt.* c. 19.

Still ascending to the source of all ministerial authority in the Church of CHRIST, the next author I shall quote, is Clemens Alexandrinus. This writer was contemporary with Tertullian, and a Presbyter of the Church of Alexandria. He was also the immediate predecessor of the famous Origen, in the philosophical and theological school of that city. After Tertullian and Origen, and the other writers of the third century, have so explicitly given their testimony to the apostolical institution of episcopacy, we may be pretty certain that Clemens intimates nothing to the contrary; but if he did, it could have no weight against such voluminous evidence. Let it also be considered, that the Church of Alexandria, at that time, was unquestionably episcopal; that Demetrius was the Bishop, and Clemens one of his Presbyters; and that the congregations in that city and the neighbouring country were numerous. Let it be further remembered, that complete evidence has been given that Bishops were then *diocesan*—that they had the supreme power of the keys—that neither Presbyters, nor Deacons could administer the sacraments but by their authority, and under their control—that, of consequence, they had a *supremacy of jurisdiction* as well as a *priority of dignity*—and, lastly, that they had the sole power of ordination and confirmation. Let these things, I say, be considered, and then we shall perceive Clemens bearing the same testimony that the writers subsequent to his time have borne.

To come at the true meaning of such writers as Clemens and Origen, who, you know, were deeply tinctured with Platonic mysticism, is not always an easy matter. When they speak like other folks, they are very intelligible, and generally instructive; but when they involve themselves in allusions, we may sometimes wander long before we reach the point they have in view.

The propriety of this observation will be evident to our readers, upon the very first inspection of the passages usually quoted from Clemens. In his *Stromata*,[y] or Miscellanies, he represents a true Gnostick, "as master of all his passions, and then improving in good works till he becomes equal to an angel here; and being bright and shining as the sun, hastens on through his righteous knowledge, and the love of GOD, to a holy mansion, as the Apostles did before." He further says, "Every one who exercised himself in the commandments of the LORD, and lived as a perfect Gnostick according to the Gospel, might be admitted into the apostolic roll;" that is, admitted to as high a seat in heaven. He further explains himself in these words: "He is a Presbyter in the Church indeed, and a true Deacon of the will of GOD, if he does and teaches the things of the LORD; not ordained of men, or therefore thought a righteous person, because made a Presbyter, but because righteous, therefore chosen into that Presbytery; and though he be not *honoured with the first seat here on earth*, yet shall hereafter sit down on

y Page 792, 793.

the twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as St. John says in the Revelations."—"The sense of this whole speculation, I think," says the candid and judicious Slater,[z] "appears plainly to be this, that in respect of true intrinsic excellency here, and of a title to perfect bliss and happiness hereafter, neither Apostle, Presbyter, Deacon, nor Layman, has any great advantage of one another, by any outward character, title, or difference of order they may have below, but purely as they excel one another in Christian virtue, divine knowledge, wisdom, and goodness; and so are more perfect Christian Gnostics than the rest. And, therefore, if a Presbyter (in particular) be such a qualified saint as this, though he be not honoured with the *first seat* here; that is, (says he) with as high a seat as any I have named to you, which, in plain connexion with the whole argument, is, with an Apostolical chair in the Church, (for an Apostle was one of the orders in his comparison, amongst the rest,) yet he shall sit in the twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as John speaks in the Revelations; as if he had directly said, although he may not sit in a Bishop's place, (whose *see* Tertullian, contemporary with Clemens, calls an *Apostolical chair*, and the Church at that age acknowledged Bishops to be their proper *successors*) yet he shall sit (says Clemens) at the last day, among the chiefest saints, to judge the world with CHRIST; and that the mentioning of a *first chair* of a Presbytery, in the sense in which the father names it here, should imply, that every Presbyter, who sat in the Presbytery also, should be of equal order with him who sat in the first and highest seat in it, by this evidence of Clemens' for it, I leave now to the reader's judgment on the place."

The next testimony I have to produce, is taken from the third book of his Pedagogue, chapter 12th.[a] After having pointed out some texts of Scripture, as containing a summary of the duties which concern Christians in general, he adds, "There are other precepts without number which concern men in particular capacities; some of which relate to Presbyters—others which belong to Bishops, and others respecting Deacons;" from which it is incontrovertible, that Clemens asserts the same form of government to be in the Church that Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, and all the other writers of the third century, did; and also that he considered the respective duties of these several orders to be distinctly stated in the holy Scriptures, and, consequently, that these orders are of divine origin.

But, Sir, how will all this agree with your scheme? How will it accord with the notion of a *Moderator* of a Presbytery? What precepts in the holy Scriptures peculiarly relate to him? What appropriate duties belong to him, excepting the duty of collecting the votes of the Presbytery? There certainly could not be much need of a Scriptural precept for that. A little common sense and honesty are quite sufficient to qualify any man for that business.

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z Page 223, 224.

a Archbishop POTTER'S *Church Government*, p. 152.

Indeed, the idea is quite ridiculous; and, therefore, I shall dismiss it.

Now what sort of a Bishop he was, who had the *first seat* on earth—to whom duties belonged, distinct from those belonging to a Presbyter, to a Deacon, and to a Layman, all the writers quoted have fully taught us; and surely I need not mention again his peculiar powers and privileges.

My next quotation, I take from your book, p. 159. "Now in the Church here, the progressions of Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, I deem to be imitations of the angelical glory, and of that dispensation which the Scriptures tell us they look for, who, following the steps of the Apostles have lived according to the Gospel, in the perfection of righteousness. These men, the Apostle writes, being taken up into the clouds, shall first minister as Deacons, then be admitted to a rank in the Presbytery, according to the progression in glory: for glory differeth from glory, until they grow up to a perfect man."

The interpretation you give to this passage, appears to me to be highly unwarrantable. You infer, that Bishops and Presbyters are of the same order, because Clemens says, he deems the progressions in the Church "to be imitations of the angelical glory;" and the Scriptures, you say, mentioning only angels and archangels, according to the comparison of Clemens, there can be but two orders in the Church.

It is, really, very extraordinary, that a candid adversary, as you profess yourself to be, should lay hold of such an obscure circumstance as this, to invalidate Clemens' explicit enumeration of the different orders of the Church. Clemens does not say, that Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, are imitations of the two-fold orders of angels and archangels, but of the *angelical glory;* and in that glory, the Scriptures assure us, there are thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers. The object Clemens had in view, was not to show, that there was just such a number of orders in the Church as in the heavenly mansions; but to show that there is a progression here below, as well as in heaven—to show that the officers of the Christian Church are no more formed upon a plan of equality, than the inhabitants of the heavenly temple. What consummate folly would it have been, had Clemens pretended to determine what orders are comprehended under the two grand distinctions of angels and archangels! He does not so much as mention them, but confines himself entirely to the idea of *progression;* as there are progressions in heaven, so there are also in the Church upon earth.

Besides, as Slater observes,[b] "since Deacons and Presbyters have unquestionably a distinct order from one another, and yet but one common word [Προκοπη] is used to express these two progressions, and that of the third together with them; it is a

b Page 226.

forced and unwarrantable construction of the venerable father's phrase, to make him mean a difference of order between two of those progressions, and no difference at all in the third." Further: when Clemens advanced his glorified saints from the inferior state of Deacons into the Presbytery afterwards, he did not consummate their bliss there; but adds, that "glory differs from glory," till they "increase to a perfect man." And that this "increase to a perfect man," was a farther advancement than that of his Deacon and Presbyter saints before, is not only evident by what he adds immediately upon it, viz.: that such as those rest in the holy mount of GOD, in the uppermost Church, where the philosophers of GOD do meet together, (so his Platonic phrase is,) and a great deal more of that superlative character of them—but, I think, is undeniably clear, at his summing up this whole argument, a leaf or two after, in these words: "You see what wisdom says of these Gnostics. And in proportion to this, there are different mansions, according to the believers. Solomon says, a select grace of faith shall be given to him, and a more delightful lot in the temple of the LORD. This comparative shows there are inferior ones in GOD's temple, which is the universal Church; and it gives us to understand that there is a superlative one too, where the LORD is. These three elect mansions are signified by the numbers in the Gospel, of thirty, sixty, and an hundred-fold. And the perfect inheritance is theirs, who attain to the perfect man, according to the image of the LORD."

I think, Sir, you must allow that this is a pretty difficult speculation, and perhaps a pretty fanciful one too. All that is clear in these quotations, is, I am persuaded, on our side of the question. It is clear, that he enumerates the three orders in the Church—that he gives to the Bishop the *first* seat; and that he asserts that there are different precepts in the Scriptures belonging to each order; which necessarily implies, that there is some important distinction between the Bishop and the Presbyter, as there is between the Presbyter and the Deacon. Thus, all is consistent, and perfectly accords with the numerous testimonies previously quoted.

Let me just observe, before I quit this point, that the great champions of Presbytery, Blondel, Salmasius, and Daille, could not perceive in Clemens, what it seems you have discovered. They acknowledge that *diocesan* episcopacy was the general government of the Church, before the time of Clemens. Many other able writers acknowledge the same, as you will see by consulting Sage's Cyprianic Age. Nay, some go up as high as the apostolic age, or thereabouts. Baxter, as quoted by Bishop Hoadly, acknowledges that there were fixed Bishops in the time of St. John. Doddridge, as quoted by Chandler,[c] admits that the distinction between Bishop and Presbyter, has been as

c *Appeal*, p. 20. *Lectures*, p. 498.

ancient as the time of St. Ignatius; and Le Clerc, a divine of the Church of Holland, says, "I have always professed to believe that episcopacy is of apostolical institution, and, consequently, very good; and that man had no manner of right to change it in any place, unless it was impossible otherwise to reform the abuses that crept into Christianity."[d] Grotius, also, was of the same opinion with Le Clerc, as appears from his Annotations on the Consultations of Cassander article xiv.: and from testimonies concerning him, annexed to his book *De veritate*, &c. Now, Sir, the concessions of these men must have proceeded from a conviction, that the *fathers* were universally *against presbytery*. It could not have proceeded from want of learning; for all the world acknowledge that they were very learned men. Nor for want of zeal; for some of them contended strenuously against the divine right of episcopacy. Do not then these concessions afford a very strong presumption, that you have given your readers a very partial and unfair view of the primitive writers? To me it appears that you have given such a view, to a degree far beyond what I expected, when I began to sift your testimonies; and I cannot but flatter myself, that hitherto, I have fully supported my assertion.

As to your other quotations from Clemens, in which a Bishop is called a Presbyter, that puerility has been answered so often, that I am ashamed to say any thing more about it.

The father who comes next in course, is Irenæus. But as this letter is sufficiently extended, I shall begin my next with his testimonies.

LETTER VII.

Rev. Sir:

I shall now proceed, in course, to consider the testimony of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in Gaul.

Let it be remembered, that Irenæus flourished about twenty years before Tertullian and Clemens—that he was, first, a Presbyter in the Church of Lyons, and, after the death of Pothinus, was raised to the episcopal chair; and that he was a disciple of the celebrated Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had been, in his youth, well acquainted with the Apostle John. Such a man must certainly have known what the government of the Church was from the apostolic age.

The following testimonies I take from your own translation of Irenæus; lib. iii. cap. 3: "The apostolic tradition is present in every Church. We can enumerate those who were con-

d As quoted by the Bishop of Lincoln.

stituted Bishops by the Apostles in the Churches, and *their successors even to us*, who taught no such thing. By showing the tradition and declared faith of the greatest and most ancient Church of Rome, which she received from the Apostles, and which is come to us *through the succession*, we confound all who conclude otherwise than they ought." Again; lib. iv. cap. 53: "True knowledge is the doctrine of the Apostles, *according to the succession of the* Bishops, to whom they delivered the Church in every place, which doctrine hath reached us, preserved in its most full delivery."

Further; lib. v. cap. 20: "These are far later than the Bishops to whom the Apostles delivered the Churches."

Once more; lib. 4. cap. 43: "Obey those Presbyters in the Church who have the succession, as we have shown, from the Apostles; who with the succession of their episcopacy, have the sure gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But as to the rest, who depart from the *succession*, and are assembled in any place whatsoever, we ought to suspect them, and look upon them as heretics, and such as disturb the peace, as persons puffed up," &c.[a]

Now, what Irenæus showed us before, was this: "We can reckon up to you those who were instituted Bishops by the Apostles themselves—to whom they committed the Churches—left them their *successors*, delivering up to them their own proper place of *mastership* in them."[b]

Here we clearly see what kind of Presbyters Irenæus means, even such as the Apostles themselves were—Presbyters of a superior kind—to whom the Apostles delivered up *their own proper place, or mastership* in the Church. The Apostles did not deliver up this *mastership* to all the Presbyters in the Church of Rome, but to one superlative Presbyter, or Bishop, who exercised the same authority that the Apostles themselves did.

This *singular* succession, so universally, without one exception, maintained by the primitive Church, has always appeared to me to be a decisive argument in favour of the superiority of Bishops. For upon what principle of common sense, of propriety, of policy, could an individual succession be maintained, if that individual did not possess powers superior to those of the Presbyters over whom he held, as Irenæus speaks, a *mastership?* That *mastership* over the clergy, the Apostles held; that *mastership*, they committed to an individual in every Church, for the same purpose. Does not this necessarily imply a singularity of commission and powers? Will it do to say, as you did before, "the Bishop might have been a *standing moderator?*" I really, Sir, wonder that you can have recourse to this con-

a Doctor M. has thought proper to omit from—"But as to the rest," &c. For what reason he knows best.

b Lib. iii. cap. 3.

temptible evasion. Were the Apostles no more than *moderators?* Did their superiority, their *mastership*, consist in collecting the votes of the Presbytery? What authority has a *moderator* over his brethren? Does he possess a single, spiritual power, which they do not? Has he, in a peculiar manner, the care of the Church? Does he hold a rod of discipline in his hands, as the Apostles did; as we shall see, in due time, Timothy did; and as we have already seen the Bishops did? In the very nature of the thing, this *mastership* implies a superiority of dignity and jurisdiction. *Masters*, and yet perfectly on a footing with those whom they govern! The *successors of the Apostles* in the government of the Church, and yet upon a level with Presbyters, who never were so distinguished! Always discriminated, in consequence of this succession, by the name of the city in which they resided, and yet not having a single distinctive power from the other Presbyters! These, Sir, are very strange things. I hope you will excuse us, Episcopalians, if we treat them as, '*contemptible puerilities.*'

"But Irenæus calls a Bishop, a Presbyter; and says, Presbyters were the successors of the Apostles."

It has, Sir, ever been the conduct of our adversaries in this dispute, to pay more regard to *names* than *things*. When they find an instance of a Bishop's being called a Presbyter, (which, by the way, is very seldom,) they speak with as much confident triumph, as if episcopacy had received its death wound. Even when the word Presbyter has the distinctive characters assigned to it of *mastership*, *supremacy of the keys*, *confirmation*, *ordination*, *Apostolical succession;* still it answers no purpose. The same thing is perpetually reiterated, and I do not see that we have any remedy but patiently to bear it.

As a specimen of this confidence of assertion, I exhibit the following extract from your 4th letter. After you have quoted Irenæus, you ask, "What could be more conclusive? If this venerable father had been taking pains to show that he employed the terms Bishop and Presbyter as different titles for the same office, he could scarcely have kept a more scrupulous and exact balance between the dignities, powers, and duties connected with each title, and ascribed interchangeably to both."

Now, Sir, consider this. I have traced *diocesan* episcopacy from the fourth century up to the second, by such discriminating and lucid characters as cannot easily be mistaken. I have shown by a cloud of witnesses, that it was not only the government of the Church when they wrote, but that it had been so from the age of the Apostles. I have observed that several of these writers have given us lists of these diocesan Bishops, as Jerome, Eusebius, Tertullian, and Irenæus; that these Bishops had under their government a number of Presbyters, and numerous congregations; that those writers gave us no hint of any change whatever, after the close of the apostolic age; but, on the contrary, assert that, *as* the Church was left by the Apostles, *so*,

in point of government, it was in their times. Yet, after all this evidence, we are told, in the most positive manner, that the Church was *presbyterian* in the days of Irenæus, because that father gives to a *superior* officer the title of an *inferior*—to a Bishop the title of Presbyter; although, at the very time, by ascribing to his Presbyter the apostolic *superiority* and *mastership*, he scarcely leaves it in our power to mistake him. Consider this, I say; and if you can think that you are right, I have nothing further to say, than—enjoy your opinion in peace.

It may be well, before I conclude this testimony, to observe, that Irenæus uses the same language, and, consequently, must have intended to convey the same ideas that Cyprian and other writers do. From *singular* succession they infer episcopal superiority. Thus Cyprian: "What greater and better thing can I wish for, than to see the flock of CHRIST illuminated by the honour of your confession? For as it is the duty of all the brethren to rejoice on this account, so particularly the Bishop's portion of the common joy is greater, inasmuch as the glory of the Church is the *superior's* glory."[c] Here the Bishop is evidently represented as a singular *superior*. Again: "What reason have we to be afraid of the wrath of GOD, when some Presbyters, neither mindful of *their own station*, nor regardful of the Bishop, their *superior*, are bold to assume all to themselves, to the reproach and contempt of their *superior*, a thing never heretofore attempted under any of my predecessors."[d] Does not Cyprian here tell us, that Bishops were superior to Presbyters, not only in his time, but under all his predecessors? It would not have required many to reach the apostolic age, and but two or three at the most, to comprehend the period when Irenæus wrote. And yet it seems Cyprian, and Origen, and Tertullian, and Irenæus, and others, mean nothing by this *superiority*, and *mastership*, and *succession to the place of the Apostles*—nothing but a *Moderatorship*.—*Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.* [Let the Jew Apella believe it, not I.]

I might here, Sir, institute two or three topics of argumentation, such as that, in consequence of this *singular* succession and *mastership*, the Bishops formed a distinct *college*, and always styled one another *colleagues*; a title which they never gave to Presbyters; and also, that they were the only persons who gave definitive voices in provincial councils. We, indeed, find a few instances of Presbyters and Deacons signing their names to the decrees of councils; but it was in consequence of their being the representatives of their Bishops, who did not attend. I might insist upon the superiority and variety of their titles;—such as *chief pastor*, *head*, *judge*, *governor*, and what has been already noticed, Bishop of the city in which they resided. These are all strong, corroborating circumstances, upon which I might dwell with advantage to our cause. But I

c *Ep.* 13. d *Ep.* 16.

really think there has been so much said already, that it is quite needless to dwell any longer upon this stage of the dispute.

There is, however, an error into which you have run, which requires correction. You inform us that "Irenæus was Bishop of Lyons when he was sent with a letter from the Presbyters of that Church, to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome, and that in that letter he is styled *brother* and *colleague*." Now, Sir, Eusebius, Book V. Chap. 4, tells us quite the contrary. He says, speaking of the sufferings of the Christians, "This account of things the Churches of Lyons and Vienne communicated in an epistle to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia; and likewise to Eleutherus, Bishop, in a letter which they sent by Irenæus, then one of the Presbyters, with a special recommendation of the person who carried it." Pothinus, their Bishop, had just received the crown of martyrdom. Irenæus was but a Presbyter, and, therefore, he was very properly styled by the Presbyters their *brother* and *colleague*. It was after Irenæus' return from Rome that he was made Bishop of Lyons.[e] You see, Sir, how much, at times, depends upon accuracy and fair statement.

To these testimonies from Irenæus I shall add that of Dionysius, the celebrated Bishop of Corinth, who flourished rather earlier than Irenæus. You know, Sir, that Eusebius[f] has preserved some fragments of his writings, particularly of some of his epistles; one of which was written to the Lacedemonians—another to the Athenians, in which he mentions the martyrdom of Publius, their Bishop, and notices Quadratus his successor—the third, to the Cretan Churches, in which he gives a great character of Philip, their Bishop—the fourth, to the Church of the Amastrians, and the rest of the Churches in Pontus, in which he mentions Palma, their Bishop—the fifth, to the Gnossians, wherein he dissuades Pinytus, their Bishop, from urging celibacy upon his clergy;—and, lastly, a letter to the Church of Rome, inscribed to Soter, the Bishop.

Here, again, we evidently have the same form of government that has hitherto uniformly presented itself to our view. Bishops in several cities, exercising authority over both clergy and laity, and deriving their succession from the Apostles; and, consequently, holding their *superiority*, their *mastership*, their *rod of discipline*. There were, besides these, a great number of very distinguished Bishops in that age, many of whom are mentioned by Eusebius[g] with every mark of commendation—virtuous, pious, learned, zealous; and of these, not a few received the crown of martyrdom. From such men there was no danger of usurpation; no danger, if it had even been in their power, of changing the institutions of their blessed Master, for whom they freely shed their blood. Dionysius you have not thought proper to notice.

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e See CAVE'S *Lit. Hist.* p. 50. f Lib. iv. c. 23. g Ibid. c. 21.

Nor have you noticed Hegesippus, of whose history some fragments have been preserved by Eusebius.

Hegesippus flourished some time before Dionysius. He was born at the beginning of the second century; so that he was, as Jerome speaks, *vicinus Apostolorum temporum*, near the times of the Apostles.[h] He may be considered as a writer in the middle of that age. According to the fragments in Eusebius,[i] "he declares of himself, that as he had made it his business to visit the Bishops of the Church, so he had found them all unanimous in their doctrines; and that the same books of the law, the same Gospel and faith, which GOD had revealed both before and by CHRIST, had been constantly preserved along with *the succession of the Bishops in all the Churches*." And further he says, that "the first heretic was Thebusis, who was disappointed in his expectations of a bishopric."[k]

Now, Sir, is it not very extraordinary, that when all the writers of antiquity lay so much stress upon *Apostolical succession*, there should be found so many teachers in the Church of CHRIST, who inform their people, that *succession* is a mere whim? We have seen, that from the days of Jerome, who was a strict maintainer of this doctrine, up to the author now under consideration, an *uninterrupted succession* was considered as one necessary mark of a Christian Church; and I think we shall find in our future speculations, that it was so considered by every other more ancient writer, who had any occasion to speak upon the subject, up to Clemens Romanus, to the Apostles, and to CHRIST himself. It is owing to the wretched notions so many entertain of the Christian ministry, that the Church is so deformed, and rent with such a variety of sects; that we have so many self-constituted teachers—so much ignorance, enthusiasm, and irregularity among the preachers of the Gospel. These things ought not to be so; nor would they be so, were Christians better acquainted with the primitive regimen and discipline.

We see now, Sir, from Hegesippus, who lived very near the apostolic age, the same episcopal government that we have been hitherto exhibiting; the same doctrine of succession to the *chairs* of the Apostles, and, consequently, the same *superiority* and *mastership*. And it appears, from him, that this government was universal; for every where in his travels, he found Bishops presiding over the clergy and laity—Bishops, pure and unanimous in their faith, and deriving their authority by *vicarious* ordination from the hands of the Apostles.

The next author you quote is Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a city of Asia. I need not transcribe the passage, as the only observation you make is, that he styles the *Apostles*, *Presbyters*. And certainly he might do it with great propriety, when they style themselves so. But does he style mere Presbyters, Apostles or Bishops? When you find instances of that kind in the second

h *De Script.* c. 22. i EUSEB. *Eccles. Hist.* lib. iv. c. 22. k Ibid.

and subsequent centuries, produce them, and they shall be treated with due attention.

After I had written the above, I perceived that I had inadvertently passed over your long quotation from Justin Martyr, who was earlier than Irenæus, but to whom you have postponed him. Why you have quoted him, I do not know, unless it be to give you an opportunity of saying something against *a form of prayer*.[1] The word *President* affords no testimony either *for* or *against* episcopacy. We must have some characteristic of the person who presides in public worship, to determine whether he is a Bishop or a Presbyter; but Justin gives us none. No doubt, the Presidents were sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, —I can perceive nothing, either for *your* purpose or *mine*, in Justin.

We are now about to open a pretty wide field of controversy, which the *epistles of Ignatius*, as you have managed them, will necessarily occasion.

You inform us, that "the epistles which go under the name of this venerable Christian Bishop, have been the subject of much controversy." Not much, since the days of Pearson and Hammond, whose vindications never *have been*, and I will venture to assert, never *will be* answered. Blondel, Salmasius, and Daille, who were undoubtedly learned men, tried all in their power to invalidate those epistles; but they were so triumphantly vindicated by the above named writers, that no person has since attempted to do any thing more than to *carp* at them. The great body of the *learned* of all denominations,[m] acknowledge the *shorter* epistles, published by Usher and Vossius, to be genuine, and entirely free from those corruptions which were universally admitted to belong to the *larger* epistles.

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1 Upon two words in Justin, Dr. M. in a note, makes the following observations: "This passage is one among the numerous testimonies with which antiquity abounds, that there were no *forms of prayer* used in the primitive Church." This must be meant of the first three centuries; for in the fourth, it was notoriously otherwise. Where those 'numerous testimonies' are to be found, I acknowledge myself profoundly ignorant; nor need I, in the least, concern myself about them, if they imply no more than the words of Justin. The expression ὅση δύναμις is not badly rendered by, *according to his ability*; but it may, at least with equal propriety, be translated, *with all might and power*, and then it may relate to the *ardency* and *intenseness* of devotion, and not to the *invention* of words. To prove this otherwise, may, for aught I know to the contrary, be within the compass of the Dr.'s critical skill; but I take the liberty to say, that I very much doubt it.

Whoever wishes to see this controversy managed with ability, should read BINGHAM, COMBER, WHEATLY, WELLS, *The London Cases*, and *The Blacksmith's Letter*.

m USHER, VOSSIUS, GROTIUS, PETAVIUS, BULL, WAKE, CAVE, COTELERIUS, GRABE, DUPIN, TILLEMONT, LE CLERC, BOCHART, FABRICIUS, and many others, have borne testimony to the genuineness and authenticity of the *Epistles of* IGNATIUS. See HORSLEY'S *Letters to Priestley*, p. 34. Even Dr. LARDNER, a dissenter of great learning, and a very able critic, says, "I do not affirm that there are in them any considerable corruptions or alterations."—*Credibility of the Gospel History*, Vol. II. p. 69. This is the very language he uses with respect to the sacred Scriptures.

There are two opinions maintained by Presbyterian writers concerning the seven epistles published by Usher and Vossius. The greater part acknowledge, that they were written by Ignatius, but insist upon their having been interpolated. This opinion is attended with insuperable difficulties. The advocates for it cannot point out any quotations from the fathers which do not agree with the epistles. Nay they acknowledge[n] that we have the same epistles that Eusebius had, and in the same state. They cannot name any father who had the least suspicion of their being corrupted, which, certainly, some one or other among so many learned men would have entertained, had there been any ground for it. They run themselves into the absurd supposition, that the *learned*, between the times of Ignatius and Eusebius, were in possession of the *genuine* epistles; but by some legerdemain they were taken out of their hands, and *interpolated* ones substituted in their place. They involve themselves in this peculiarly gross absurdity—that the Churches to which these epistles were written, and which, of course, had the original manuscripts in their possession, were in like manner juggled out of them. And still farther, upon this opinion, they will find it impossible to give a rational answer to the question, why may not all the other writings of antiquity have been corrupted, if the Christians of the second and third centuries were so stupid, or so careless as to be imposed upon in this extraordinary manner? Nay, what security have we for the purity of the Scriptures themselves, when those who settled the *canon* were not capable, (it would seem upon this hypothesis,) to distinguish between genuine and corrupt writings? These are serious considerations, which certainly deserve the attention of those who have adopted this unjustifiable opinion.

The other supposition is, that Ignatius did not write any epistles. This was the opinion of Blondel. Here we have one of the strongest instances upon record, to what an astonishing length the spirit of controversy will sometimes carry a man. Can it be justly deemed a breach of charity, to say with Grotius, when writing to Vossius concerning Blondel's opinion—"The Epistles of Ignatius, which your son brought out of Italy, pure from all those things which the learned have hitherto suspected, [in the *larger* epistles,] Blondel will not admit, because they afford a clear testimony to the antiquity of episcopacy."[o] And the learned Mosheim acknowledges,[p] although at the expense of consistency, that there would have been no dispute about those epistles, had they been silent on the point of episcopacy; and then adds, that they are involved in obscurity. To what, Sir, does this amount? Undoubtedly to this—do not quote them in favour of episcopacy, and we will admit them to be

n BLONDEL, DAILLE, SALMASIUS, and ALBERTINUS acknowledge it. PEARSON'S *Vindiciæ*, Chap. iv.

o PEARSON'S *Vind.* Chap. v.

p *De Rebus Christianorum*, &c. p. 161.

genuine; but if you do, we will enter our *caveat* against them. It is not hard to determine what name this deserves.

This opinion of Blondel's is maintained in the face of all antiquity. Polycarp, the intimate friend of Ignatius, bears the following testimony in his epistle to the Philippians. "Ye wrote to me, both ye, and also Ignatius, that if any one went from hence into Syria, he should bring your letters with him; which also I will take care of, as soon as I shall have a convenient opportunity, either by myself, or him whom I shall send upon your account. The epistles of Ignatius which he wrote unto *us*, together with what others have come to our hands, we have sent to you according to your order; which are subjoined to this epistle; by which ye may be greatly profited. For they treat of faith and patience, and of all things that pertain to edification in the LORD." It is not possible to produce a more direct testimony to any writings, than this to the epistles of Ignatius.

We have a testimony also from Irenæus directly to our purpose. "As," says he, "one of our people, for his testimony of GOD condemned to wild beasts, said—*I am the wheat of* GOD, *and ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I might be found to be pure bread.*" These words are in the fourth section of Ignatius' epistle to the Romans. And this passage is also cited from Irenæus by Eusebius; who, in another place, likewise says: "Irenæus mentions Justin Martyr and Ignatius, making use of testimonies out of their writings."

We meet with Ignatius twice mentioned by Origen. "Finally," says he, "I remember that one of the saints, Ignatius by name, has said of CHRIST, *My love is crucified.*" Which words are in the *epistle to the Romans.* Again: "I have observed it elegantly written in an epistle of a martyr, I mean Ignatius, second Bishop of Antioch after Peter, that *the virginity of Mary was unknown to the prince of this world.*" This is in the *epistle to the Ephesians.*

Eusebius, the learned historian of the fourth century, bears full testimony to these epistles. So do Chrysostom, and Jerome, and Theodoret, and Gelasius, in the same century. And if you wish to have any more testimonies, please to consult Bishop Pearson, who produces them in every age, down to the fourteenth.[p]

Now, Sir, before I proceed to the quotations from Ignatius, allow me to ask you a few questions. Can there be any evidence to a point of this kind more satisfactory than this? Can we suppose that men who lived so near the time of Ignatius, and who were so learned, so ingenious, so critical, were not competent judges, whether the epistles of Ignatius were genuine or not? Are men who so accurately decide upon the merits of the writings before their time, distinguishing with great judgment

q See also LARDNER'S *Credibility*, &c. Vol. II. Art. Ignat.

the *genuine* from the *doubtful* and the *spurious*, to be disregarded in this instance only? What, was there nothing in the epistles of Ignatius to excite their suspicion of their being a forgery? Would not the circumstance of their making the government of the Church *episcopal*, at a time when they must have known that it was *presbyterian*, (if it was really so,) have been an irrefragable proof that they were not written by Ignatius? Would not the style, the manner, the sentiments, and other circumstances, which, Presbyterian writers say, were not suitable to the age in which Ignatius lived, have struck those learned *ancients* as marks of forgery, or corruption, as readily and forcibly as they have struck a few *moderns*? With what information are we furnished, to enable us to decide with more precision upon this point, than the great critics of antiquity? Let a single reason be given, why the *learned* of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries were not qualified to judge upon a point of this critical nature. Let them be proved ignorant and illiterate, or that they had some hypothesis to serve, or some interest to promote by receiving these epistles; and then we will acknowledge that some abatement is to be made from their testimony. But if nothing of this sort can be done, as I am very certain it cannot, it is trifling to the last degree, to cavil at the epistles of Ignatius.

I think it will be readily allowed, by every candid man, that the testimony of Ignatius must be of immense weight. Having been placed, by apostolic authority, at the head of the Church of Antioch, and having governed it for forty years, the greater part of that time within the apostolic age, his testimony to a matter of fact, must be deemed of equal weight with that of an Apostle, unless there be reason to think him inferior in point of veracity. But his well known virtue and piety, equal to the virtue and piety of any one of the Apostles, judging from every known circumstance relating to either, forbid every suspicion of that sort. The inspiration of the Apostles, in this case, gives them no advantage whatever; for it requires no inspiration for a man of common sense, to tell under what form of government he has lived during forty years, and the chief office of which, he himself discharged during that period. All this is so obvious, that I do not think any person of consideration will dispute it.

Although you admit the genuineness of the Ignatian epistles, yet you do not seem to do it with a *good grace*. It comes from you reluctantly: you take care to tell us, that 'in the opinion of many of the ablest and best judges in the Protestant world, they are unworthy of confidence.' To what purpose is this observation, if it be not with a design to keep the minds of your readers in a state of suspense, so as to prevent any bad impression, which the seeming favourableness of those epistles to our cause might possibly make?

But, Sir, I cannot see either the consistency or the advantage of this; for, as you have made it appear, in your opinion, that

Ignatius was altogether *presbyterian*, it is astonishing to me, that you should insinuate one word to his disadvantage. If he be your friend, as you seem to think, why, in the name of consistency, do you not defend his epistles, by every argument which truth will admit? Why do you come reluctantly to his testimonies? They are the very testimonies you ought to prize most highly. Nothing can be more decisive but the sacred Scriptures; and these must be perfectly clear and unequivocal.

It is, Sir, to me very unaccountable, that Blondel, Salmasius, and Daille, should have laboured so hard to invalidate these epistles, when they are, if you be right, so clearly on their side of the question. To them, they must have appeared in a very different point of light from what they do to you. If they had not been convinced that they were too episcopal for them to manage, they would have admitted them, and reasoned from them in favour of presbytery. This would have been *argumentum ad homines*, which would effectually have shut the mouth of every Episcopalian. But no; they did not choose to try that experiment. You, on the contrary, venture to affirm, that, 'instead of yielding to the cause of *diocesan* episcopacy that efficient support which is imagined, they do not contain a *single sentence* which can be construed in its favour; but much which can only be reconciled with the primitive, *parochial episcopacy*, or presbyterian government, so evidently portrayed in Scripture.' This is adventurous enough. Let us see how it will turn out.

Before I adduce my testimonies from Ignatius, I would remind my readers, that it has been fully proved by Scripture evidence, as well as from other authorities, that the Church of Antioch consisted of thousands of Christians, and, consequently, of numerous congregations, with a multiplicity of Presbyters to minister to them. Keeping this in mind, there will be no difficulty in determining what kind of episcopacy prevailed there.

My first quotation shall be from the epistle to the Trallians. Ignatius exhorts them to be subject to their Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons; "for" says he, "without these, there is no Church" —that is, upon your hypothesis, without a *Moderator*, Presbyters, and Deacons, there is no Church. What relation has a Moderator to a Church? None at all: his relation is entirely to the Presbytery; and he has not a single duty to perform in that character to the people; yet, Ignatius says, without this *Moderator*, who has no relation to the Church, there cannot be a Church. What would any man call this in plain English? Nonsense.

After exhorting the Trallians to beware of the poisonous doctrines of certain dangerous heretics, he adds: "And this you will do while you are not puffed up, nor separated from God, even Jesus Christ; nor from the Bishop, and the commands of the Apostles"—that is, while you are not separated from the *Moderator*, with whom, as such, you have no kind of con-

nexion whatever. Again: "He that is within the altar is pure; but he that does any thing" (belonging to the altar) "without the Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons, is defiled in his conscience." "Without the Bishop"—that is, the *Moderator*, who, as such, has no relation to the altar; and, in his character as Presbyter, is perfectly on a footing with his colleagues. Upon genuine presbyterian principles, then, Ignatius ought to have left out the Bishop; who has no business at all in these epistles, but upon prelatical principles.

In like manner, in the inscription of his epistle to the Philadelphians, he "salutes them in the blood of JESUS CHRIST, our everlasting and permanent joy, especially if they were at unity with the Bishop, the Presbyters, and the Deacons." The Bishop is an essential character, with whom they were to be at unity; but, as *Moderator*, his character is not essential in relation to the people, nor can he possibly be to them a centre of unity. Again: "Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the Church, separately from the Bishop. Let that be esteemed a valid Eucharist, which is celebrated by the Bishop, or by one whom he appoints. Without the Bishop, it is not lawful to baptize, nor to celebrate the feast of charity." The meaning of this is, upon your hypothesis—"Let that be esteemed a valid Eucharist, which is celebrated by the" *Moderator*, "or by whom he appoints. Without the" *Moderator*, "it is not lawful to baptize, nor to celebrate the feast of charity." Absurdity upon absurdity, gross and palpable!

Once more: "What is the Bishop but he that hath all authority and power? What is the presbytery but a sacred constitution of counsellors and assessors to the Bishop? What are the Deacons but imitators of CHRIST, and ministers to the Bishop, as CHRIST was to the Father?" "What is the Bishop," the *Moderator*, "but he that hath all authority and power?" Is that the case with a Presbyterian *Moderator?* Do you suppose that Ignatius meant "all authority and power" over the votes of the presbytery? Again: "What is the presbytery but a sacred constitution of counsellors and assessors to the" *Moderator?* Is the presbytery called by the *Moderator* to counsel him how to conduct the affairs of the Church, how to exercise this plenitude of spiritual power over Presbyters, Deacons, and Laity? I really, Sir, do not mean to insult your understanding by these questions; but the gloss you have given to the writings of Ignatius, is so consummately ridiculous, that I am astonished at your ever committing such thoughts to paper. And then not proposing your interpretation as a *modest conjecture*, but affirming in the most positive manner, that the testimony of Ignatius is in direct opposition to episcopacy, and in perfect conformity with *presbyterian parity!* When a man proceeds to this length, it becomes necessary to speak plainly, and on no account to suffer such bold assertions to pass unanswered.

Nor will it, Sir, help you in the least, if you change the word

Moderator, as some have done, for *Pastor*, or *Rector*, or *Prime Presbyter*. This makes no alteration in the *thing:* Still Ignatius' Bishop, call him what you please, will be the first officer in the Christian Church, governing Presbyters and Deacons, and several congregations—exercising the supreme power of the keys, and by necessary consequence, holding a supreme jurisdiction; and all this by divine institution—"according to the appointment of GOD the Father."

These are but a few of the passages that might be adduced from the writings of Ignatius; but they are full enough to show that the Christian Church was, up to the apostolic age, completely prelatical, and that no change had taken place, as you and others fancy, between the first and the fourth century.

Let us now see what you have to object to these decisive testimonies. And here, Sir, I must previously observe, how very unfair and uncandid it is, to retail to your readers several cavils, which have been proved in the most triumphant manner *to be* cavils, and yet never to take the least notice of any of the replies to them. You certainly must have heard of, if you have not read, Slater's *Original Draught*, in answer to Lord King, which, it has always been confidently said, made his Lordship a convert to diocesan episcopacy. Be that as it may, no answer was ever returned to it, and I am well satisfied no answer ever can be returned. If you have heard of Slater's book, but not read it, you should have made a point of procuring it, and of stating his answers, that your readers might have a fair opportunity of judging for themselves. You are not, indeed, singular in this respect, if that will afford you any plea. Boyse did so many years ago, and recently Dr. Campbell. The latter was answered by Bishop Skinner, and yet you have not taken the least notice of the Bishop's answer. At this rate, there is no end of disputing. Every few years the controversy is revived, and we have to go over the same ground perpetually. This is precisely the conduct of the Deists. In their attacks upon Christianity, they never take notice of the triumphant replies that have been made to their objections; but come forward with as much confidence, and as much petulance, as if the field was entirely their own. This conduct, Presbyterians as well as Episcopalians very justly censure; but when you are contending with us on the subject of Church government, forgetting your censure of the Deists, you observe the very same kind of management. This is by no means fair and impartial. But to your objections.

1. You say, that the Church, of which a Bishop had the care, is represented in the epistles as coming together to *one place*, (Επι τὸ αὐτό.) Now, Sir, you certainly know perfectly well, that this phrase does not so much denote a *place* as *a thing in general*, according to the grammatical rule with respect to neuter words; and this you will find to be the case in the following instances.

Slater observes[r] that "the learned Grotius, explaining this phrase in Acts iii. 1, translates it in these words, *circa idem tempus*, 'about the same *time*.' And in Beza's translation of the New Testament, the note and paraphrase upon it, Acts ii. 44, is this—that 'the common assemblies of the Church, with their mutual agreement in the same doctrine, and the great unanimity of their hearts, were signified by it.' Agreeably to this, is what we meet with in the Greek translation of Psalm xxxiv. 3, where that which the Septuagint render επι τὸ αὐτὸ, by Aquila is translated 'Ομοθυμαδὸν, *with one mind and one heart.* Justin Martyr also says, that 'all the Christians throughout cities and countries assemble επι τὸ αὐτὸ'—certainly not *in the same place*, but for *the same thing*, or *purpose*, that is, to worship GOD. And in the fourth chapter of *the Acts* it is said, that *the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together* επι τὸ αὐτὸ *against the* LORD, *and against his* CHRIST. It would be absurd to suppose, that they all actually assembled *in one place*, where the passage evidently means that they conspired together *for the same purpose*, the word plainly pointing to the *object*, and not to the *place* of their combination."

It now, Sir, appears beyond all contradiction, that the phrase in question must always be interpreted according to the nature of the subject, and that possessing this latitude of meaning, your confining it to a sense which answers your purpose, is by no means admissible.

But you will ask, how can μία προσευχὴ and μία δεησις, *one prayer* and *one supplication*, be consistent with a plurality of congregations?

I answer, that as there most certainly were several congregations at Antioch, from the Scripture account of that Church, the *one prayer* and *one supplication*, must be accommodated to that idea; and there is not the least difficulty attending it—for the expression may, with equal propriety, be understood in a twofold sense—either as to the words in which prayer is expressed, or as to the sense and substance. That it is not meant to be *one* as to the *words*, you will certainly insist upon; otherwise you would make Ignatius prescribe a *liturgy*, for which you do not appear to have much taste. And, therefore, "it must be understood with respect to the *substance*; or, in plainer terms, it must be prayer made with strict analogy to the one common faith, and sound doctrine of the Catholic Church throughout the Christian world, as every true Christian prayer ought to be."

"And that this was Ignatius' meaning, may be inferred, 1. From the words he immediately joins with it—*one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope.* The two latter words imply a plain unity in them, and yet have so diffusive a sense as to extend to all the congregations of the Catholic Church; and, therefore, why not the two former?—2. We may infer it also

r *Original Draught*, p. 58.

from the use he was then making of it, which was directly to secure them from schismatical conventicles, and heretical notions; and since the Bishop himself was to approve (as we have seen Ignatius allowed him to do) of any minister whatsoever that should officiate for them, and thereby reserve to himself the inspection, visitation, and censure of them, (which is a natural consequence of it,) whatsoever prayer the people of his diocese should join in, with such a commissioned and approved Presbyter as this, could never bring them into that danger of schism which the holy martyr here warned them against; but being orthodox, and as conformable to Christian faith and doctrine as the Bishop's own could be, would, in the true sense of the primitive father, and to the great end for which he intended it, be that one prayer, which the Bishop and all his diocese were to offer up to GOD."

"And that this was a true notion of the unity of prayer in the primitive Churches, Tertullian would satisfy us, if we would allow him to speak only what he could justify and make good in his *Apology* for all the Christians in the Roman empire. He takes the freedom to declare to the Roman magistrates what kind of prayer the Christian Churches used in general, how innocent their petitions were, and frankly mentions several particulars of them by way of upbraiding them all for persecuting subjects that lived and prayed so loyally and harmlessly as they did.[s] If he could do this without some common *liturgies* in use among them, or some known *canon* of the ministerial offices; surely it could be upon no other ground than this, that he was sure the Christian Church's prayers were one and the same, in all places, in the sense we are now speaking of; that is, they were bound to bear a strict analogy to that one creed, that one and the same system of Christian doctrine, and that one divine model of all prayer, which our blessed LORD delivered to them, and every one of them were known to be guided by. Other fathers, as ancient, or ancienter than Tertullian, speak in the same manner."[t] But on this head, I think, there needs no more.

We have, however, before we finish, another unity to account for. Ignatius says, "there is but one *altar*, as but one Bishop." To explain this phrase, the judicious Slater observes, "The unity of the altar, the unity of the Bishop, the unity of the Eucharist, the unity of Christian prayer, and the very unity of the whole Church itself, are all founded upon the common bottom that the unity of the Christian *Priesthood* is; and no man ever so unlocked the evangelical secret as the inimitable St. Cyprian. 'Episcopacy,' says he, 'is but one; a part whereof each [Bishop] holds, so as to be interested for the whole. The Church is also one, which, by its fruitful increase, improves into a multitude, as the

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s Oramus pro Imperatoribus, pro ministris eorum ac potestatibus, pro statu seculi, pro rerum quiete, pro mora finis. TERTULL. *Apol.* c. 39.

t SLATER'S *Original Draught*, p. 55, 56, 57.

beams of the sun are many, as branches from trees, and streams from a fountain; whose number, though it seems dispersed by the abundant plenty of them, yet their unity is preserved by the common original of them all.' Apply this plain rule to all sorts of unities mentioned here, and see if the primitive expressions of one Church, one altar, and one Bishop, do not evidently consist with as many Churches, altars, and Bishops, as can be proved to be undeniably derived from one and the same original institutor; the unity of whose divine power and SPIRIT, diffused at first among the chosen twelve, stamps a character of unity upon all who regularly descend from them, and upon every individual who only claims under, and owns his authority from, and his dependance upon, such as they."[u]

I perceive, Sir, that you have, after Dr. Campbell, translated *τον αρτον*, *the loaf*, instead of *the bread;* but it is beyond my comprehension what you can gain by it. I doubt, whether you can persuade any person in his senses, that one *loaf* would be sufficient for the *many myriads* of Christians, who, we are told, in the Acts of the Apostles, continued steadfast in the apostolic *breaking of bread.* All the bread offered at a thousand different altars, form but *one bread*—or *one loaf*, if you will have it so—in the same mystical sense, as a thousand different churches in the same diocese, form but one Church.

As a farther proof of your congregational scheme, you tell us, that the Bishop "was to be *personally* acquainted with all his flock." So said Lord King before you. But, as Slater justly observes, "The words of Ignatius[v] have no such affirmation in them, but are only a plain advice to Polycarp to do what the primitive Bishops always did, that is, to keep the names of every member of his Church enrolled in what the ancients called the *Matricula* of their Church. The occasion of the words imply it to be so. He just before besought Polycarp "not to neglect the widows of the Church;" and immediately after, desires him "not to overlook so much as the men-servants and maid-servants in it;" and in the midst of this (as a means to know the quality, number, and condition of his diocese) advises him *to inquire out all by name*,[w] that is, to get such a register of their names, that upon occasion of any object of charity proposed to him, of any complaint or application made to him about any within his cure or jurisdiction, or in case of apostacy, or perseverance in time of persecution, or the like; by means of this general *matricula*, he (as the other Bishops did) might more directly know how the case stood. And, which was more than all this, the names thus entered in this sacred record were personally entitled *then* to all the public intercessions and spiritual blessings obtained by the eucharistical prayers, oblations, and sacraments of the whole Church; and to have their names blotted out of this,

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u *Original Draught*, p. 60.
v Εξ ονοματος παντας ζητει. *Ep. Polyc.* p. 13.
w *Original Draught*, p. 79.

was a constant effect of excommunication, and was dreaded by all that had any true veneration (as these primitive Christians had) for the holy ordinances of the Church.—These were sufficient reasons for that apostolical father to put a Bishop of the Church in mind to be careful of keeping such a necessary *matricula* as this, and an effectual way for Polycarp to take care of the meanest and poorest members of his diocese; which, the context tells us, was the occasion of Ignatius' using these words. But as to the matter of but one single congregation being then under his care, and that *he must personally know them all by name*, as one neighbour knows another, I think they no more imply it, than that Augustus Cæsar had but one town to command, and could know every subject he had, when (for many political occasions) he caused them all to be enrolled, and required the state of his empire to be brought in to him: for the censor's work, in such a case as that, was to give in an estimate of the age, children, family, and estates of all the people under him, as Tully gives us an account of it."[x]

Once more, Sir: You tell us "all marriages were celebrated by the Bishop." But Ignatius intimates nothing like it. He says, "It was not proper that any should marry without the Bishop's consent;" and singular as this may appear to us, it was highly expedient that it should be so in the primitive Church; as otherwise, a Christian might have married a Heathen, which, probably, would have terminated in the apostacy of the former, and particularly if the husband was the Heathen. To prevent this risk, and probably too from that veneration in which Bishops were held in that day, the Bishop's advice was asked, and his license procured for the celebration of the marriage; but there is not the least evidence, that the Bishop was always the officiating minister. Now, all this might be done, says Slater, "in the very city of London or York at this day, if either banns or license were managed with that proper care with which the Church designed they should." But the Church is now in very different circumstances, and therefore we can hardly form a correct judgment upon this point. At any rate, there is no reason to think that the Bishop celebrated all the marriages within his diocese.

I have now, Sir, given, if I do not deceive myself, satisfactory answers to all your objections, and, I think, when compared with the evidence for *diocesan* episcopacy, they are *trifles light as air*, and totally unworthy of the least consideration.

You appear to me, Sir, very sensible of the difficulty that attends your scheme of government, from the circumstance of a primitive Bishop having a number of Presbyters under his jurisdiction. Generally, this appears to have been the case; but how to account for this upon a principle of expediency or utility,

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x Censores populi ævitates, soboles, familias, pecuniasque censento. Ac de leg. lib. iii. fol. 1. *Orig. Draught*, p. 79, 80.

all the advocates of parity seem to be quite at a loss. You have recourse, as some of them had, to the supposition, or probability, that several of them were *ruling* Elders. But you should first have fully proved by evidence, either from Ignatius himself or some writer or writers contemporary with him or before him, that there ever was any such character in the Christian Church. This you have attempted to do from a text of Scripture of a very ambiguous nature, in the opinion of some very great men, even of your own persuasion. This subject I shall discuss in my next letter, with as much brevity as I possibly can.

LETTER VIII.

REV. SIR:

I SHALL now enter upon the discussion of the question, Whether there were *lay Elders* in the primitive Church? I do not undertake to examine this point because I think it of consequence to episcopacy. Were I to admit such an order, still the government of the Church might be placed under *Diocesans*. As Bishops have not the *sole* power in ecclesiastical affairs; as Presbyters are their counsellors and assistants in the administration of Church discipline, so *ruling Elders*, even supposing them to have an equal share in the government with *preaching* Presbyters, would by no means invade the negative power of Bishops. Every congregation in this diocese might have two or three men of that order, to assist the Rector of the church with their advice in matters of discipline, and yet all be subject to the Bishop's supremacy. Episcopacy, then, is not at all affected by the decision of this question.

Why, then, you may ask me, do I give myself any trouble about it?—To wrest from you the pretence that *some* of the Presbyters, if not *all* of them, mentioned by Ignatius, were *ruling* Elders.

My first observation, with respect to this order of Church officers, is, that nine-tenths of the Protestant world are opposed to the notion of such an institution. I know it does not follow logically from this circumstance, that the order is unfounded; but it affords a strong presumption against it. Nor do we find this order in the Roman, Greek, or Coptic Churches. Nay, even Presbyterians are greatly divided upon this subject. Some of the most learned amongst them, and the most strenuous for presbytery, have entirely given it up. Bishop Sage observes,[a] that "Chamier, Salmasius, Blondel, Ludovicus Capellus, Moyses Amiraldus, and many others, are against it. The whole tribe

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a *Vind.* &c. p. 442.

of the Belgic Remonstrants (keen parity men) are against it in their confession of faith." Mr. Baxter, in his preface to his *Five Disputations of Church Government*, says expressly, that "as far as he could understand, the greater part, if not three for one of the English Presbyterian ministers, were as far against *Lay-Elders* as any Prelatists of them all." He confesses himself to be one, and he cites Mr. Vines for another. Now, Sir, if almost the whole Christian world may be marshalled against you, and even a great part of your own persuasion, and they as learned, at least, as those who are advocates for Lay-Elders, I cannot but think and say, that you ought not to have been so positive upon this point. It will strike every candid mind at once, that there can be but little said in favour of an order of men, when almost the whole Christian world condemn it, and will not admit it into their Churches. This consideration, you will, I presume, duly appreciate; not considering it as a *logical* argument, but as *argumentum ad verecundiam*, and as affording a very strong presumption against you.

The text of Scripture which you have quoted in favour of Lay-Elders, is, to say the very least of it, quite ambiguous. Let us examine it. *Let the Elders that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour; especially they that labour in the word and doctrine.* Now, it certainly does no violence to the words, or to the construction of the sentence, or to any other part of the Scripture, to interpret this passage thus: *Let the* PRESBYTERS *that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour;* 'especially if they labour much in preaching the word and propagating sound doctrine.' There is evidently no necessity upon any ground or principle whatever, to extract from this passage the double order of *preaching* and *ruling* Elders. Neither the words, nor the context require it. Is it not, then, unjustifiable to found an order of men upon a text of Scripture so completely ambiguous? What would you not say against Episcopalians, were they to found the order of Bishops upon such uncertainty? I declare, that I should be ashamed to say or write one word in favour of it. No, Sir; if I cannot give ten times the evidence from the holy Scriptures, in favour of Bishops, that you can in favour of Lay-Elders, I will then acknowledge, that our cause rests entirely upon the testimonies of the primitive writers. This, indeed, I deem proof quite sufficient; and if you can give me the same proof for *Lay-Elders*, in the first three centuries, I will then acknowledge them, notwithstanding the ambiguity of this text, to be of apostolical institution. For I subscribe freely to the assertion of Vincentius Lirinensis, that whatever has been believed "always and every where, and by all, ought to be held fast; for that is truly catholic."

I find, Sir, by consulting Dr. Campbell's *Ecclesiastical Lectures*, that he considers the text in question, altogether insufficient to support the institution of Lay-Elders. He says,[b] that

b Vol. I. p. 178.

the word *especially* "is not intended to indicate a different office, but to distinguish from others those who assiduously apply themselves to the most important as well as the most difficult part of their office, public teaching; that the distinction intended, is, therefore, not official, but personal; that it does not relate to a difference in the powers conferred, but solely to a difference in their application. It is not to the persons who have the charge, but to those *who labour* in it. And to this exposition, as far the more natural, I entirely agree." Indeed, it is altogether inadmissible, that two officers, so essentially different, should invariably be confounded under one common name. And it is a most extraordinary instance of attachment to a hypothesis, that you, who make a community of names an argument in favour of parity, (which, by the way, is a mere fallacy, as I shall show hereafter,) should insist, that two essentially different officers are designated by the same title. A capacity for teaching appears to be essential to the character of an Elder. St. Paul tells Timothy and Titus, that *Elders* must be *apt to teach, able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers;* and we never once in the Scriptures find the epithets *ruling* and *preaching* given to Elders, by way of distinction. I know that *names* are not always to be depended upon; but in such cases, the *thing* signified must be characterized, or we shall remain in the dark. That, in the instance before us, such distinctive characters are given to Elders, as to make it clear or in any degree probable, that some *preach* and some *rule*, cannot, in the opinion of the generality of divines, ever be made out.

But, although the mere construction of the sentence will not enable *us* to establish *our* sense of it, yet, if we attend to the meaning of one word in it, and to the sentence following, I think we shall be able to decide the point. The word I mean, is *honour*. What idea are we to attach to this word? The next words show: *For it is written, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.* And, *The labourer is worthy of his reward.* Here it is evident, that the word *honour* means *maintenance.* Then the passage, according to your interpretation, will run thus: Let the *Lay-Elders* who rule well, be accounted worthy of double maintenance, especially the Elders that are laborious in *preaching* as well as *ruling*. Here, then, it seems, both kinds of Elders are to have an ample maintenance; there is the same Scriptural ground for maintaining the one, as for maintaining the other. Now, Sir, what is there in the employment of a *ruling* Elder, who now and then meets his Bishop in Presbytery, perhaps once a month, to regulate matters of discipline, or to "set in order the things that may be wanting," to entitle him to a maintenance? It is obvious to every reflecting mind, that the ministers of the word and sacraments, who devote all their time to their profession, and, therefore, cannot at the same time, be employed in secular callings, ought to have a liberal support. But, to put a *ruling* Elder, in this respect,

upon a footing with a minister of the word, is altogether preposterous; and I am convinced, that your congregations would think it so, were it proposed to allow the ruling Elders as ample a salary as they do their ministers, or any salary at all. Let the experiment be made universally in your churches, and I will commit myself, that we shall never see the face of a *ruling* Elder again.

If, then, the words and construction of the passage, do not necessarily establish the notion of *ruling* Elders; and if, upon every fair principle of interpretation, they may be viewed as holding up a different idea; and, particularly, if it follows from your sense of the passage, that *ruling* Elders are entitled to an ample maintenance, as well as the ministers of the word and sacraments; I think I may safely leave it with Presbyterians themselves to determine, whether that order of men can be of apostolical institution. If it be determined in the affirmative, then the order may claim by apostolical precept, a liberal maintenance; for *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.* And, *The labourer is worthy of his reward.*

There is, however, another way of determining whether an institution be apostolical or not; and that is, as I have already mentioned, by applying the rule of Vincentius. Do the *fathers* of the first three centuries, say any thing about this *lay order*? You have not quoted a single father, within that period, to prove it, except Cyprian, whose words, however, prove quite the contrary. It was the case of Numidicus, which was fully considered in a former letter. The express words of Cyprian are, that he placed himself in the Presbytery that he might be added to the number of the *Priests*, who had been reduced by the persecution. Now, here I set my foot. The rule of Vincentius, upon your hypothesis, fails in every respect. The fathers of those best and purest ages of Christianity, although they repeatedly enumerate the different orders of the Church, never give us the least hint of *ruling* Elders. Deacons we hear of in great plenty; but 'not the shadow' of a ruling Elder, 'ever crosses our path.' This is an officer, according to your system, superior to Deacons, and yet he is never so much as mentioned. Who can believe this? It is impossible, upon any received principle of evidence—upon any solid ground of reasoning, to admit it. For if the text, upon which you found this order, is ambiguous, as it evidently is; if there is no other text of Scripture which can throw light upon the one in dispute, as you yourself must acknowledge; if your sense of the passage imposes upon the Church the duty of making as ample provision for *Lay*-Elders, as for the ministers of the word and sacraments; and, lastly, if the writers of the three first ages make no mention of the order, as they certainly do not; then we may safely place it among the inventions of men; and, therefore, at best, but matter of expediency.

But if we cannot find any testimony for it in the first three

hundred years, is there no evidence from two or three writers of the fourth century, that the order had existed in more primitive times, although it was in their time entirely out of use? I answer, if such testimony could be produced, it would be to no purpose. For, in that case, we may be sure, that the Bishops of the Church were well satisfied that it was but a temporary expedient. It is not every institution of the Apostles that is binding. Some, in their very nature, are mere circumstances of convenience, as all parties allow; and *ruling* Elders, if they ever existed, must have been, in the judgment of the Church, of that number.

But let us put the matter beyond contradiction, by examining the testimonies in the fourth century which you have produced. Your first testimony is from Hilary, in his explication of 1 Tim. v. 1. You ought to have begun your quotation thus[c]—"For, indeed, among all nations, old age is honourable. Hence it is, that both the *synagogue*, and afterwards the *Church*, had *Seniors*, without whose counsel nothing was done in the Church; which practice, or custom,[d] by what negligence it *grew into disuse* I know not, unless, perhaps, by the *sloth*, or rather *pride* of the teachers, while they wished to appear something." The sense of this whole passage is very evident. Hilary says, "old age is honourable among all nations." Hence *the elderly men* of the Church used to be consulted, which custom is now laid aside. Pray, Sir, what is there in this passage that implies the apostolical institution of *ruling* Elders? He must be keen sighted that can perceive any thing like it. He says nothing more than that it was formerly customary to consult the aged; no doubt in difficult situations of the Church, which frequently occurred in the first three centuries, while persecution lasted. And certainly, this was all very natural and very proper; for who are better qualified to give advice than the *aged?* But to bring this as a proof of an order of men concerned in the discipline of the Church, and superior to that of the Deacons, and by apostolical appointment too, is one of the many instances which we daily see, of a zeal for opinions, which spurns every check from common sense, and every remonstrance from reason.

This whole matter has, I think, been fairly stated in a short compass by the learned Bingham.[e] He says, "As to the *Seniores Ecclesiæ*, they were a sort of Elders who were not of the clergy, yet had some concern in the care of the Church. The name often occurs in Optatus and in St. Austin, from whom we may easily learn the nature of their office. Optatus says, when Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, was forced to leave his Church, in the time of the Diocletian persecution, he committed the ornaments and utensils of the Church to such of the Elders as he

c Nam apud omnes quidem gentes honorabilis est senectus, &c.
d. Quod, [without any substantive] quod quia negligentia obsoleverit, &c.
e *Antiq. Christ. Church*, p. 82, 83.

could trust, *fidelibus senioribus commendavit.* Upon which Albaspinæus notes, that besides the clergy, there were then some *lay Elders*, who were entrusted to take care of the goods of the Church. At the end of Optatus there is a tract called *The Purgation of Fœlix and Cæcilian*, wherein there are several epistles that make mention of the same name, as that of Fortis and Pupurius, and another nameless author. St. Austin inscribes one of his epistles to his own Church of Hippo, in this manner: *Clero, Senioribus, et universæ Plebi*—'To the clergy, the Elders, and all the people.' And in several other places, he has occasion to mention these *Seniores* in other Churches.

"From whence some have concluded, that these were ruling *lay Elders*, according to the *new model*, and *modern acceptation.* Whereas, as the ingenious author of the *Humble Remonstrance* rightly observes in his *Reply*, those *Seniores* of the primitive Church were quite another thing. Some of them were the *Optimates*, the chief men, or magistrates of the place, such as we still call *Aldermen*, from the ancient appellation of *Seniores.* These are those which the Carbasiessitan council of Donatists, in St. Austin, called *Seniores Nobilissimi;* and one of the councils of Carthage, more expressly, *Magistratus vel Seniores locorum*, the 'Magistrates or Elders of every city,' whom the Bishops were to take with them to give the Donatists a meeting. In this sense Dr. Hammond observes, from Sir Henry Spelman, and some of our Saxon writings, that anciently our Saxon kings had the same title of *Elders—Aldermanni, Presbyteri*, and *Seniores:* as in the Saxon translation of the Bible, the word *Princes* is commonly rendered *Aldermen.* And of this sort were some of those *Seniores Ecclesiæ* that have been mentioned, whose advice and assistance also, no doubt, the Bishops took in many weighty affairs of the Church. The other sort, which were more properly called *Seniores Ecclesiastici*, were such as were sometimes trusted with the utensils, treasure, and outward affairs of the Church; and may be compared to our *Church-Wardens, Vestry-Men, Stewards*, who have some care of the affairs of the Church, but are not concerned as *ruling* Elders in the government, or discipline thereof. Now, *lay Elders* are a degree above the Deacons; but the *Seniores Ecclesiæ* were below them; which is a further evidence that they were not *lay Elders* in the modern acceptation." This, I am well satisfied, is the true state of the whole matter.

Before I quit this head, I must rectify a mistake into which my inadvertence led me. I have said in this letter, that you have not quoted any author but Cyprian in the third century. I have since found that I was mistaken, for you have quoted Origen also; but his words are nothing at all to your purpose. They run thus, according to your translation, but which I shall take the liberty to alter a little. "There are some *persons* appointed [τεταγμένοι without a substantive] who may inquire concerning the *conversation* and *manners* of those that are admitted, that

they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness." There is not a syllable here about *ruling* Elders. The matter was this: Celsus, who was a bitter enemy to Christianity had calumniated the disciples of CHRIST by saying, that they admitted the vilest into their communion. Origen answers, "No; the governors of the Church were careful to admit none to its privileges who were licentious; and always excommunicated those who, after their baptism, became wicked." From the whole series of the discourse, it is evident, that the persons [τεταγμένοι] who did this, had the power of the keys, could administer sacraments, excommunicate the scandalous, impose penances, and absolve penitents.[f] Thus turns out, like your other testimonies, the quotation from Origen.

I cannot, Sir, but think, that it is now pretty apparent, that the order of *lay* Elders in the Presbyterian Church, is very far from being entitled to apostolic sanction, or even to any degree of ecclesiastical prescription. In the words of Bishop Taylor, "The new office of a *lay Elder*, I cannot comprehend in any reasonable proportion; his person, his quality, his office, his authority, his subordination, his commission, hath made so many divisions, and new emergent questions; and they, none of them all, asserted either by Scripture or antiquity; that if I had a mind to leave the way of GOD and of the Catholic Church, and run in pursuit of this meteor, I might quickly be amused; but should find nothing certain but the certainty of being misguided. Therefore, if not for conscience sake, yet for prudence, it is good to remain in the fold of CHRIST, under the guard and supravision of those shepherds CHRIST hath appointed."[g]

There being then no proof whatever, that there ever was such an order of men in the Church as your *ruling* Elders, your assertion that 'Ignatius' Presbyters might have been all *ruling* Elders for aught that appears to the contrary,' is saying that they might have been of an order, which has never yet been proved to have had an existence.

There is also another important consideration that directly militates against your conjecture, that Ignatius' Presbyters might be in part, or even the whole of them, *ruling* Elders. It is, that the epistles are totally inconsistent with such a notion. Let us try them in a few instances. "I exhort you, that you study to do all things in a divine concord—your Presbyters [*ruling Elders*] in the place of the council of Apostles; and your Deacons being entrusted with the ministry of JESUS CHRIST." Here Ignatius makes the Deacons a branch of the ministry. But every branch of the ministry had authority to preach; consequently, the Deacons, instead of being inferior to the *ruling* Elders, must have been superior to them; for it is your own account of the matter, that *preaching* is superior to *governing*,

f *Lib.* iii. *Contra Cels.*

g *Episcopacy Asserted*, p. 168. Folio.

Again: "Your *ruling* Elders in the place of the council of the Apostles." Now, this cannot be true in any sense, as the *ruling* Elders did not preach, nor administer the sacraments, nor govern the Church with supreme power. Let us try another passage: "Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the Church, without the Bishop. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as valid, which is either offered by the Bishop, or by him [*by that ruling Elder*] to whom the Bishop has given his consent." You certainly will not subscribe to this. Further: "It is not lawful without the Bishop [for the *ruling Elders*] either to baptize or to celebrate the holy communion."—Enough! Enough!

What now are the results from the view we have taken of the epistles of Ignatius?

1. That in every city, in which Christianity was embraced by considerable numbers, a single Bishop, not a plurality, was divinely appointed to superintend and govern the Church, of whatever number of congregations it might have consisted.

2. That to those *singular* Bishops, honour, reverence, and subjection were due from all orders, Presbyters, Deacons, and Laity.

3. That union with the Bishop was so necessary to be maintained by all the members of the Church, that whoever separated himself from the Bishop, was thereby reputed to be cut off from the Church itself.

4. That without the Bishop's license no spiritual act could be performed in the Church; and that, consequently, he had the supreme power of the keys, which put all ranks, in spiritual matters, under his jurisdiction.

5. That there was a regular and complete gradation of rank and authority in the Church. All were in the first place to honour and obey the Bishop; next, the Presbyters, and lastly, the Deacons; for "they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God."

Now, Sir, if all this can be reconciled to *parochial episcopacy*, or *presbyterian* government, as you assert, then light and darkness, truth and falsehood, the most direct and palpable contradictions, can be reconciled.

But there is one more difficulty which you throw in our way. You say, that 'there is no hint in the epistles of Ignatius about the powers of ordaining and confirming being appropriated to the Bishops.' Suppose, Sir, a fanatic were to tell you, that there is no hint given by Ignatius, that ministers were ordained at all, either by Bishops or Presbyters; would you not think him a very unreasonable caviller, were he to urge this silence as a reason for rejecting the apostolic rite of ordination? You certainly would. If it has been fully proved that Ignatius' Bishops were *diocesans*, how can his silence about *confirmation* and *ordination*, when he had not the least occasion to mention them, be urged as an objection? If Bishops had the chief government of the Church, by necessary consequence, *ordina-*

tion was their peculiar office. For, as Dr. Chandler justly observes,[h] "there never was in fact, so far as we can discover by the light of history, nor indeed in the nature of things can there be, an Episcopal Church, wherein any other than episcopal ordination was or can be allowed. In every society, the appointment and the commissions of the various degrees of officers, must proceed from those that govern it. This is so evident, that there never was, I believe, an advocate for the presbyterian party, but would readily grant, that whensoever and wheresoever the government of the Church was episcopal, the ordinations were also episcopal." The silence then of Ignatius with respect to *ordination*, affords not the slightest objection to his Bishops being *diocesans*. The superiority of Bishops being once proved, their prerogative to commission all orders of ecclesiastics follows as a matter of course.

I have now, Sir, I think, fairly lodged *diocesan* episcopacy within the apostolic age; for we are not to confine it just to the time when Ignatius wrote; that is, to the beginning of the second century. He had been Bishop of Antioch forty years, and was appointed thereto by apostolical authority; and he certainly does not give us the least hint, that he was at first a *parochial*, and afterwards a *diocesan* Bishop. On the contrary, he repeatedly asserts, (and he certainly knew the truth of the matter,) that Bishops were of divine appointment. What evidence then can be more decisive?

The next writer you notice is Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. It is needless for me to transcribe the passage you have quoted from him. The only two points in your comment upon it are, that the word *Bishop* is no where mentioned, and that he speaks only of two orders, *Presbyters* and *Deacons*.

I really should not think it worth while to make any reply to these observations, were it not that unthinking people take it for granted, when no reply *is* made, none *can* be made. Polycarp, you say, 'does not mention the word *Bishop*.' Suppose he had mentioned it, would you consider that as any proof of *diocesan* episcopacy? No; thank you for that. Why then notice the omission, when you know that he sent with his own letter, the epistles of Ignatius, in which, duty to the Bishop was mentioned over and over again. It surely was needless for him to say a syllable upon that point. He does not even style himself Bishop of *Smyrna;* yet all antiquity assert that he *was*, and you freely acknowledge it. But if your observation has any force in it, he was no Bishop of any sort. Oh yes! he was a Presbyter, which was the same thing, and probably *Moderator* of the Presbytery; for his address is, 'Polycarp, and the Presbyters that are with him,' &c. Now, as you acknowledge him to be a Bishop, he might have said, 'Polycarp the Bishop, and the Presbyters that are with him.' Is this the style of your

h *Appeal farther defended*, p. 105.

Moderators? Would you venture to use it when you are the Moderator of your Presbytery? I doubt it. The truth is, this is mere idle cavil. Polycarp, we know, was just such a Bishop as Ignatius was—a Bishop with a number of Presbyters and congregations under his government; without whose permission, no ecclesiastical functions could be performed, and on whom, the very Presbyters depended for all legal authority.

And as to Polycarp's comprehending all orders under the general appellation of Presbyters and Deacons, you can no more, from that circumstance, set aside the superior rank and order of Bishops, than you can, when the Jewish ministry are so often mentioned under the general appellation of Priests and Levites, set aside the High Priest.

Why Polycarp did not particularly address his epistle to the Bishop of Philippi, instead of the whole Church, a much wiser man than I pretend to be may not be able to tell. But I think it may with as much propriety be asked you, why he did not address it to the *Moderator* of the Presbytery; for by your own acknowledgment, all the Churches we read of, had *then* a *standing* Moderator. When you answer this question, I will undertake to answer the other.

As to the *Pastor* of Hermas, which you quote next, I never could perceive any thing in it that can be of the least service to either party. I shall therefore take no notice of it.

We have now given a sufficient view of the authorities for *diocesan* episcopacy in the second, third, and fourth centuries. We have seen Ignatius, Hegesippus, Dionysius, Irenæus, and Clemens, in the second century; Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Firmilian, and the apostolical canons in the third; in the fourth, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Augustine, Jerome, with all the councils of that century; and in the beginning of the fifth, Isidore and Theodoret, all bearing testimony, in the most direct and explicit manner, to the apostolic origin of *diocesan* episcopacy. There is not the least intimation given, in any part of their writings, that a change took place after the death of the Apostles, which must have been the case, according to your hypothesis; on the contrary, what the government was in their day, it was from the beginning. This is the necessary inference from their ascribing to it a divine origin, and from the doctrine of apostolic succession, as given us by several of them; Jerome among others. Now, it is scarcely possible to imagine, that a number of authors, writing at different times, and on so many different occasions, should not incidentally drop a hint of the change in the government of the Church, if there had been any. Nay, farther, that these men should gravely ascribe a divine origin to episcopacy, and not meet with the least contradiction, when there were thousands in the Church who were as well acquainted with the matter as they were, argues such consummate impudence on the one hand, and such consummate ignorance and stupidity on the other, as render the supposition absolutely

preposterous. Nothing but the notoriety of the fact, could have prevented inconsistency and contradiction in their accounts of this matter. Truth is always the same, simple, uniform, and consistent; but error and falsehood are so varying and irregular, as always to betray themselves. However convenient it might have been for the Bishops to have it believed, that their office was divinely instituted, yet, if there had been no foundation in fact for such a belief, it is a most unreasonable supposition, that such a notion should have obtained currency in the first four centuries, when there were so many whose learning and talents *could* have disproved it, and whose prejudice, or passion, on numerous occasions, *would* have done it. Nay, it would be incredible, were we ignorant of their characters, that all the Bishops in the first three ages, were so depraved as to destroy that government, which, they knew, CHRIST left in his Church. But we know to a certainty, that they were generally men of very distinguished virtue and piety, and that many of them were martyrs for the religion of CHRIST. Such men *would* not alter divine institutions; and before the establishment of Christianity, they *could* not. Nay, after that event, had the arm of power been stretched out in support of the ambitious pretensions of the Bishops, there would, undoubtedly, have been some opposition, some dissatisfaction, some remonstrance, some record of the matter. But no, there is not the least hint of any thing of the kind. The writers *before* this *supposed* event, as well as those *after* it, speak the same uniform language. Turn to which class you please, and you will find perfect harmony and consistence.

Let, then, the early writers of the Church be put upon a fair trial; let their testimony be equitably examined, as in all other cases of fact, by the stated laws of evidence; and I am well satisfied, that, however the advocates for ministerial parity may, by their ingenuity, puzzle and confound the real merits of the cause; or, by their glosses, assumptions, and confident assertions, mislead the judgment of the prejudiced and unwary; yet, the testimony of the fathers, on this subject, will be deemed decisive by every impartial mind.

But it seems, after all the evidence we have produced in favour of *diocesan* episcopacy, not the least advantage has been gained by it. You tell us very confidently, in your third letter, that, 'on such a subject, even if the fathers were unanimous, we might and ought to hesitate, if nothing like what they intimate were to be found in the word of GOD.' Now let our readers judge between us; let every man acquainted with the nature and force of evidence, judge between us. I say, on the contrary, that if the fathers unanimously assert the apostolic origin of episcopacy, although there be not found one syllable upon the subject in the word of GOD, their testimony, upon every fair principle of evidence, must be deemed decisive.

To prove that my opinion is correct, I have but to give a short view of the nature of the evidence. The question is, whether

the Christian world could be assured, fifty years after the event, that a particular form of government was established in the Church of the Apostles, when there was no particular record made of it at the time? They certainly could. The government of the Church was not like a solitary fact, without notice, and without consequences. If it were universally episcopal in the beginning of the second century, it must have been in consequence of its having been so in the first; and the universality of it in the first, could have been owing to nothing less than apostolic authority. For, had it been left to uninspired men, we may be assured that different forms would have taken place, as there is nothing about which men differ more than modes of government. When, therefore, the Christians of the second century saw the episcopal regimen descend every where from the apostolic age to them, their testimony that the fact was so, is absolutely decisive. There was no possibility of mistake in the matter. Thousands who lived in the second century, had lived a part of their lives, and a great part too, in the first. They must, therefore, have seen some of the Apostles, and, with their own eyes, the government which they established. Polycarp was one of these; Ignatius was another. The latter spent nearly the whole of a long life in the apostolic age; and, according to the ancients, was ordained by St. Peter, Bishop of Antioch. Polycarp was the disciple of the Apostle John; and there must have been myriads in the Lesser Asia, who had been instructed by his preaching. There could not, therefore, have been the least difficulty in determining, with absolute certainty, under what regimen the Apostles left the Church. Men that have eyes to see, *will* see; and that have ears to hear, *will* hear, what is continually in their view, and within their hearing.

Of such facts, men want no records; and if records were produced in which there was some obscurity, they would immediately make their own senses their commentator, and would never be so infatuated, as to interpret an obscure passage or two in the record, in direct opposition to the report of their senses. Plain facts are not like speculative opinions; susceptible of any shape under a skilful hand. Men will believe their senses, let theorists say what they will.

Your observation, then, that even the unanimous testimony of the fathers to episcopacy, does not oblige us to yield our assent to that form of government if the Scriptures are silent about it, is contrary to the common sense and practice of mankind. In the histories of all nations, we find no records coeval with the first establishment of their government. Every man who has read the history of the Roman Empire, believes, that monarchy was its first form of government; yet, there are no records coeval with the establishment of that government. The earliest writers depend upon uninterrupted, unvarying tradition. This is the case, I believe, with all other ancient governments: where the records go back within a century or two of the origin of their

policy, all mankind are perfectly satisfied; and that man would be deemed unreasonable, who *presumes* a change took place, when there is not the least appearance of it.

These reasonings and facts do, in my opinion, prove, that we should act very unreasonably, were we to hesitate a moment in giving our assent to the position, that episcopacy is of apostolic origin, although it should turn out, upon examination, that the Scriptures are perfectly silent upon the subject.

To the assertion we have just been examining, upon the common principles of evidence, may be added another of your strange assertions, that 'the fathers are not unanimous, but contradict one another.' That this is a gross error, I am persuaded every impartial person will be satisfied, who duly weighs the evidence I have adduced. They all, either in direct terms or by necessary inference, ascribe episcopacy to apostolic institution. Not *one* of them says, it was not so. Not *one* of them gives a hint that episcopacy is a human institution. They, indeed, in a few instances, when there were no particular reasons for distinguishing the orders of the Church, give the title of Presbyter to a Bishop, because he really is a Presbyter; as the Jewish Scriptures (I am ashamed to mention it so often) generally give the title of Priest to the High Priest. But to infer contradiction from this is abusing words and perverting reason.

But still farther: It was morally impossible that there should be any contradiction. The government of the Church was not involved in obscurity. If it was Presbyterian in the second age, the writers of that age must have known it; and to suppose some of them asserted *presbytery*, and some *episcopacy*, is perfectly ridiculous; as ridiculous as it would be some ages hence, for any one to assert, that from the days of Calvin to the eighteenth century, some of the *presbyterian* clergy declare that their Church had the *episcopal* form, and others that it had the *presbyterian*. And the former might have some little show of truth given to it, by producing several instances of Presbyterian ministers calling themselves Bishops; and particularly by quoting some detached passages from your 'letters,' and giving them an artful touch or two, you might be made to appear as staunch an Episcopalian as I am. There is no kind of difficulty in all this; of which I could soon convince you could I prevail upon myself to indulge in such puerile amusement.

We have now, Sir, I think, quite enough about the fathers, and I flatter myself that they are altogether on our side of the question. I shall now proceed to examine the holy Scriptures, after having first made some observations on a passage in the first epistle of Clemens Romanus. But with this, I shall begin my next letter.

LETTER IX.

REV. SIR:

WE have one more uninspired writer to consult, Clemens Romanus, Bishop of Rome. The passage which Episcopalians quote from this venerable Bishop, is in his *first Epistle to the Corinthians*. The genuineness of this epistle is, I believe, doubted by none. The passage runs thus: "Seeing, then, these things are manifest to us, [Christians,] it will behove us to take care that we do all things in order, whatsoever our LORD has commanded us to do. And particularly, that we perform our offerings and services to GOD at their appointed seasons; for these he has commanded to be done, not rashly and disorderly, but at certain times and hours. And, therefore, he has ordained, by his supreme will and authority, both where and by what persons they are to be performed. They, therefore, who make their offerings [in the Church] at the appointed season, are happy and accepted; because that, obeying the commandments of the LORD, they are free from sin. For, the *High Priest* has his proper services; and to the *Priests* their proper place is appointed; and to the Levites appertain their proper ministries; and the *lay-man* is confined within the bounds of what is commanded to lay-men."

From this whole passage it is evident, first, that Clemens inculcates upon the *whole* Church, (for the epistle is addressed to the whole,) obedience and subordination in their respective stations. This, he says, is GOD's appointment, and, therefore, not to be dispensed with. He argues (as will be seen by consulting the whole epistle) from the evident subordination throughout the *whole natural world*—from the subordination every where observed in *military affairs;* and, lastly, from the subordination established by GOD himself in the Jewish Church. The inference, then, necessarily must be, (supposing Clemens to reason with any degree of propriety and force,) that there must also be subordination in the Christian Church. In an army, he says, there are different orders of officers—in the temple-service, there are different orders; but, Sir, upon your hypothesis, in the Christian Church there is no difference of orders; and yet, you consider Clemens as arguing from this subordination of officers in an army and in the Jewish Church, to prove the necessity of subordination in the Christian Church, in which there is but one rank of officers. If you say, it is enough to make good Clemens' reasoning, that there be a distinction between the clergy and the laity; and that, upon this ground, he might exhort the *latter* to be obedient to the *former* in all spiritual matters: I answer, no; that is by no means sufficient. For this epistle is directed to the whole Church of Corinth—to the *clergy* as well as to the *laity*. With respect to the *former*, therefore, it was, in the main,

useless. There being no subordination of ranks among *them*, of course there were no superiors to be obeyed. The laity, indeed, might have been exhorted to obey their pastors, because GOD had made a distinction between them; but to urge this upon the *clergy*, by analogical reasoning, from a diversity of ranks among the officers of an army and the priests of the temple, when there was no difference of official rank in the Christian Church, would, it appears to me, be too weak and inconclusive reasoning to be ascribed to Clemens. The argument has no kind of force, but as the *Christian* Church in this respect resembles the *Jewish*. And this kind of analogical reasoning must have been peculiarly forcible to those who were so well acquainted with the ministries of the temple as Christians were in the time of Clemens. Let us do all things (to paraphrase the passage) "in order—let us regard times, and seasons, and persons—let all ranks in CHRIST's Church confine themselves to their proper stations—the laity to theirs; the High Priest (using the language of the temple) to his; the subordinate Priests to theirs; and the inferior ministers, the Levites, to theirs." This makes the whole consistent, pertinent, and conclusive.

It is an extremely irksome business to be obliged to notice every observation that an author makes, or else be charged with not meeting him at all points. Were it not for this consideration, I should not notice the following observations.—'As well might it be contended that Clemens would have the Christian Church organized like an *army;* and that he recommends *four orders* of ministers, corresponding with the four classes of military officers to which he alludes. How wonderful must be the prejudice that can make this use of an allusion! And above all, how weak and desperate must be that cause which cannot be supported but by recurring to such means!'

To your declamation, Sir, I have nothing to say; but to what has some little appearance of reasoning, I thus reply.

There is not the same reason for supposing that Clemens would have four ranks of officers in the Christian Church, because he mentions four in the *Roman army*, as there is for supposing that he would have three, because there are three in the Jewish Church. I know, indeed, that in strict logical reasoning, as Clemens mentions four ranks of officers in the Roman army, and three in the Jewish Church, it cannot be determined from these allusions how many orders there are in the Christian Church, whether four or three. But it is enough for my purpose, that Clemens' analogies imply a difference of orders; and *parity* being once destroyed by his mode of reasoning, there cannot be any doubt whether the officers of the Christian Church compose four or three orders. A difference of orders being once admitted, certainly, Sir, you can have no doubt that it is the distinction of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, corresponding in gradations of rank with High Priest, Priest, and Levite.

This, I think, is quite sufficient to prove a diversity of ranks in the Christian, as there was in the Jewish Church.

Your next passage from Clemens is the following: "In countries and cities where the Apostles preached, they ordained their first converts for Bishops and Deacons over those who should believe," &c. From this passage you infer, that there was but one order of ministers in the Church, Presbyters or Bishops.

Now let it be remembered, that in the time of Clemens, the title of Bishop was not appropriated to the first order, but was indiscriminately applied with that of Presbyter to the second. Then the orders of the Church, according to this epistle, were Apostles, Presbyters or Bishops, and Deacons. This is beyond contradiction. The usual way of evading this is, by asserting that the apostolic office, as to every thing of an extraordinary and miraculous nature, was to cease; and that as to their ordinary powers, the Apostles were perfectly on a level with the Presbyters of the Church. That the apostolic office in every thing of an extraordinary nature was to cease, is granted; but that in their permanent authority the Apostles were on a level with the Presbyters, I utterly deny. To say that they were, is to contradict all antiquity. The primitive fathers acknowledged none to be the successors of the Apostles, in their reserved, ordinary powers of government, ordination, confirmation, and censure, but those whom they afterwards peculiarly called Bishops. And what Clemens says, is by no means inconsistent with this; for he knew very well that the Apostles, in their ordinary character, were superior to Presbyters and Deacons; and, therefore, from the enumeration, it appears that there were three orders of ministers in the Church of CHRIST.

Before I conclude this head, it may be well to notice a trifling objection, or rather cavil, which is usually made by our opponents, when urged by the testimony of Clemens, in favour of different orders in the Christian ministry. They say, that he does not mention any Bishop at Corinth when he wrote his epistle. This is undoubtedly true. Nor does he mention, that he himself was Bishop of Rome when he wrote; yet all antiquity asserts the fact. The epistle runs in the name of the whole Church of Rome, and is addressed to the whole Church of Corinth. Of that Church we have no records till the second century. Then we read in a fragment of the history of Hegesippus, preserved by Eusebius,[a] that Primus was Bishop of Corinth by succession. From that time, history takes notice of a chief pastor established over it; but we have no list of the names of the Bishops who governed that see during the first century. But who can doubt that the Church of Corinth had the same episcopal establishment that Ignatius, a short time after, assures us all other Churches had, "to the utmost bounds of the earth?"

I would observe further, that this arguing, or, to speak more properly, cavilling from the silence of an author, against any

a *Eccles. Hist.* Lib. IV. cap. xxii. p. 182.

fact in question, can never be admitted without the most pernicious consequences. The Scripture, and some of its most important institutions, would be materially affected by it. For instance—some have asserted, that the first institution of the Sabbath was by Moses in the wilderness; and they attempt to prove it by saying, that there is not the least hint in the Pentateuch that it was kept by Adam and his posterity, till after the exit of the Hebrews from Egypt. Consequently, say they, when Moses speaks of that institution immediately after the creation, he speaks by way of anticipation. This is the opinion of Paley, Heylin, and others; but to me it appears a violent construction of the words of Moses. So again, in the case of the Christian Sabbath; there is no mention (say they) in the New Testament, that it was instituted by CHRIST, or by his Apostles, under the direction of the HOLY SPIRIT; and that is undoubtedly true; but it by no means follows, that it is a mere ecclesiastical institution, resulting from human prudence. From the silence of the Scriptures, the Socinians also argue against the continuance of the sacrament of baptism in the Church. CHRIST, say they, ordered his Apostles to baptize and disciple all nations; but when converted to the faith, he does not command that the sacrament of baptism be continued; and, therefore, it ought not to be administered after a nation becomes Christian. All this I take to be mere cavilling, and hardly deserving an answer. Exactly of a piece with it is the inference of our opponents, that the Church of Corinth was not episcopal, because there is no mention of a Bishop in the epistle of Clemens; when it appears from Ignatius, but a short time after, that all the world was episcopal.

I have now produced all the testimonies from the fathers that appear to me necessary to establish the apostolical institution of diocesan episcopacy; and I cannot but flatter myself that the evidence is clear, positive, and decisive. It has been admitted to be so up to the middle of the second century, by our most learned opponents, Blondel, Salmasius, Daille, the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and others. And they admit, that the epistles of Ignatius are decidedly in favour of episcopacy; and, by consequence, if they subscribed to their genuineness, they must give up the cause. I cannot think that it is any breach of charity to say, that this was the true motive of their opposition to these epistles. We are very apt to be satisfied with very weak objections to the truth of what we wish to be false; and with very slight reasons in favour of what we wish to be true. Good men as well as bad, are too much under the effect of this weakness; and it often determines their judgment when they have not the least suspicion of it. In this way, I reconcile my assertion with charity.

I have now, Sir, adduced a large portion of the evidence that is to be found in the primitive writers, in favour of *diocesan* episcopacy; and I think I may safely say, in the words of

Bishop Hoadly, that "we have as universal, and as unanimous a testimony of all writers and historians from the Apostles' days, as could reasonably be expected or desired. Every one who speaks of the government of the Church in any place, witnessing that episcopacy was the settled form; and every one who hath occasion to speak of the original of it, tracing it up to the Apostles' days, and fixing it upon their decree; and what is very remarkable, no one contradicting this, either of the friends or enemies of Christianity, either of the orthodox or heretical, through those ages in which only such assertions concerning this matter of fact could well be disproved. From which testimonies I cannot but think it highly reasonable to infer, that episcopacy was of *apostolical institution*. Were there only testimonies to be produced, that this was the government of the Church in all ages, it would be but reasonable to conclude it of *apostolical institution*; it being so highly improbable that so material a point should be established without their advice or decree, when we find the Churches consulting them upon every occasion, and upon matters not of greater importance than this. But when we find the same persons witnessing not only that the government of the Church was *episcopal*, but that it was of *apostolical institution*, and delivered down from the beginning as such, this adds weight to the matter, and makes it more undoubted. So that here are two points to which they bear witness, that this was the government of the Church in their days, and that it was of *apostolical institution*. And in these there is such a constancy and unanimity, that even St. Jerome himself (who was born near two hundred and fifty years after the Apostles, and is the chief person in all that time whom the Presbyterians cite for any purpose of theirs) traces up episcopacy to the very Apostles, and makes it of their institution; and in the very place where he most exalts Presbyters, he excepts *ordination* as a work always peculiar to Bishops. So that supposing there be nothing in the New Testament concerning the superiority of Bishops to Presbyters; and nothing of any confinement of the power of ordination to that *superior order*; yet there may be sufficient evidence of *apostolical institution* from these testimonies. And if there be sufficient evidence of this, by what means soever it came to us, it ought to be received. Now, that *this* ought to be accounted sufficient evidence by our brethren in this case, is plain from their receiving the same testimonies in another most important point, which is not, and could not be plainly settled in the Scriptures themselves. For it is upon the testimony of ancient writers in all ages, that they as well as we, believe the books of the New Testament to have been extant from the Apostles' days; and to have been written by the Apostles, or by persons approved of by them. And this, indeed, makes me the more solicitous to establish the credibility of this testimony of the ancient Church concerning episcopacy, because I fear the objections with great zeal advanced against it, will be found at last

to have a very bad influence upon all historical certainty, and to reach farther than they were designed, to the prejudice of what is of the last importance to the Christian Church."[b] Thus reasons Bishop Hoadley: and very powerful reasoning it is. It involves consequences of very high import, and, therefore, deserves your most serious consideration.

But it seems, Sir, that this clear and unanimous testimony of the whole Church in the second, third, fourth, and all subsequent ages to the apostolic institution of episcopacy, is not enough to convince you. You want 'a warrant which would be indubitable and satisfactory, if all books, excepting the Bible, were banished from the Church.'[c]

This is really a most astonishing demand from a man of sense and learning. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read it. Well, Sir, let us meet upon this point and see what the result will be.

1. There are many passages in the Bible that cannot be explained, without *extraneous* information, without the knowledge of customs, manners, laws, judicatories, weights, measures, and a variety of other things. But these are not to be learned but from books. Of the meaning of all these passages, then, we must remain perfectly ignorant; for the supposition is, that there is not a book in the Church but the Bible.

2. Upon this supposition, we could not have had the Scriptures translated with any tolerable propriety. Indeed, I do not see how we could have had any translation of the New Testament; for the knowledge of *modern* Greek would not qualify any man to translate the Greek Testament. Something better might be done with the Hebrew Bible, as the language is still preserved among the Jews; but, notwithstanding, without the knowledge of the cognate oriental languages, the difficulties of translating would be exceedingly multiplied. These would be very serious evils.

3. If we had no other book in the world but the Bible, I cannot conceive how we are to determine the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred books. How are we to prove that the writings ascribed to Peter, Paul, John, &c. were of their inditing; or that the present copy is a genuine transcript of the original manuscripts? Here we shall be completely aground. In this, as well as in other respects, the writings of the fathers are of immense value; and in a dispute with a Deist, you would, Sir, lay hold of them with avidity. But suppose the Deist were to demand of you 'a warrant which would be indubitable and satisfactory, if all books, excepting the Bible, were banished from the Church.' What would you say to this demand? Would you tell him, that you take it for granted, that all the succeeding copies of the original manuscripts are *sincere*, and free from every kind of corruption? You know very well, Sir, that he

b *Brief Defence of Episcopal Ordination*, p. 10, 11, 12. c Letter III., p. 72.

would treat such an answer with the most sovereign contempt, and that too with the utmost propriety. Here you would be involved in inextricable difficulty; your mouth would be stopped, and you would be obliged to yield the cause, without the possibility of making a reply. But this is not all; you could not, in the fourth place, maintain the grand evidences of Christianity.

4. The two pillars upon which the Christian fabric rests, are miracles and prophecies. The Deist might ask you, How can you prove that any one prophecy in the Bible has been fulfilled? You cannot say, from historical evidence, for *that* your unreasonable demand precludes. Were he to demand of you a proof that the prophecies were not delivered after the events, you have no proof to give him; for the Bible alone, upon your supposition, is to prove the fulfilment of its own prophecies. And as to miracles, the Deist would ask you, how does it appear that the wonderful works recorded in the Scriptures were ever performed? Who, he might say, ever saw them, and who has borne witness that they were ever wrought? Here again, you have shut your own mouth; for you have excluded the testimonies of the primitive writers. In short, Sir, your rejecting the voice of antiquity in favour of episcopacy, does, in its genuine consequences, take out of our hands, "God's last, best gift to man," the revelation of his will by Jesus Christ, and by the first messengers of salvation, his holy Apostles.

These, Sir, are very dreadful considerations; resulting necessarily from your position, that the Bible alone, without any extraneous evidence or illustration, is quite sufficient for our guidance and direction.

Nor can you, Sir, take shelter under the general opinion of Protestant Churches, and of the Church of England in particular, that "whatsoever is not read in *holy Scripture*, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite, or necessary to salvation." This I take to be sound doctrine, when properly understood. This article of our Church is levelled against the Romish doctrine, which maintains the necessity of believing *oral* traditions, which, from the mode of conveyance, can never possess any character of authenticity. Besides, the absurdity of supposing that the Almighty would convey to us the terms of our salvation, partly by writing, and partly by oral tradition, partly in the surest way of conveying instruction to mankind, and partly in the most uncertain way imaginable. But to suppose, that the Church meant to exclude every species of information that might throw light upon the Bible, is too preposterous to meet with a moment's reception.

This article of our Church, distinguishes between doctrines as points of faith necessary to be believed in order to salvation, and matters of fact, which, though important, and by all means to be retained, yet, are not of the essence of religion. Thus, it

is essential to salvation, that all who live where the light of revelation is diffused should believe; for "he that believeth not shall be damned." Again: It is essential to salvation that all men should repent; for "unless ye repent, ye shall all perish." Once more: It is essential to salvation, that all men should be holy; for "without holiness, no man shall see the LORD." These virtues and graces constitute the very essence of the Christian religion; and, therefore, we may be well assured that they would be required in the most explicit and positive terms, and not be left, in the smallest degree, to the uncertainty of *oral* tradition. Accordingly we find in the sacred Scriptures, with respect to these points, "line upon line, and precept upon precept;" so that "he who runs may read." But with respect to matters of fact of a particular character, or particularly circumstanced, there was no necessity for express precept; no necessity for explicit, positive declaration. Thus, with respect to the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, a positive precept, or an explicit declaration was altogether unnecessary; for Christians, in the first age, had only to open their eyes to see the Apostles sanctifying that holy day; and, no doubt, they had it from the lips of those inspired men, that they were directed either by the HOLY GHOST, or by CHRIST himself, to change the day of rest; but of *that* we have no record. We must, therefore, depend entirely upon the testimony of the primitive Church for that fact; and accordingly we have it to a sufficient degree. In like manner, we have no precept, nor express warrant for infant baptism; but we make it out to be a scriptural practice by reasoning, by analogy, and by circumstances affording a great degree of probability. When we add to these considerations the testimony of the primitive Church, it appears to me, that the evidence is enough to satisfy every impartial mind; but precept, or express warrant, we have not from Scripture. Again: The proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred writings depends entirely upon the testimony of the primitive Church, and there is no other possible way of settling the canon of Scripture. There is no precept, nor express warrant in the Scripture itself, for receiving all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are deemed canonical; no, we must have recourse to testimony, and that testimony is altogether *extraneous*. The Scriptures bear no express testimony to their own genuineness and authenticity; but if they did, it would be to no purpose; for the sincerity of the passages in which the testimony is comprehended, must be proved by external evidence. So that we cannot stir one step without the aid of the primitive Church. In like manner, if we do not find any precept, nor express warrant in Scripture for diocesan episcopacy, yet, having the unanimous voice of the ancients in our favour, the evidence upon every principal of sound reasoning, ought to be deemed conclusive; and it appears to me, that if you reject this evidence, and insist upon precept, or express warrant, you must reject, in order to

be consistent, the evidence for the change of the Sabbath, for the baptism of infants, for the canon of Scripture, and, in short, the evidence for all past matters of fact.

But while I am thus contending, that the testimony of the primitive Church is abundantly sufficient to prove the fact, that diocesan episcopacy was of apostolic institution, you certainly will not suppose that I mean to decline meeting you on Scripture ground. No, Sir; I readily and cheerfully pass within that sacred enclosure; and shall immediately come to the point, after I have made a preliminary observation.

As episcopacy appears from a cloud of witnesses to be the government of the Church, at the close of the apostolic age, it can never be admitted, that any thing in the New Testament militates against this fact. That would be a contradiction unparalleled in the history of mankind. It would place us in the most perplexing situation that can be conceived; for we must, if your hypothesis be true, either give up the passages in the New Testament, relating to this point, or we must reject the highest degree of historical evidence, which, from the nature of the subject, is the only evidence we can have. Thus, sound historical evidence and inspiration would be set at variance; or, in other words, man, as a Christian, must contradict himself as a reasonable being. Now, Sir, for the Scripture proofs.

The first proof of episcopacy that I shall adduce from Scripture, is furnished by the Epistles to the seven Churches of Asia Minor. It is the general opinion of the learned, that St. John wrote the Revelations in the island of Patmos, in the year 95, and in the fourteenth of the reign of Domitian. At that time, Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch, and had been for upwards of twenty years. We have seen what sort of Bishops those of Ignatius were; and this circumstance will, I think, assist us in settling the quality of the *Apocalyptic Angels*.

That those seven *Angels* were the Bishops of the seven *diocesan* Churches of the Proconsular Asia, Episcopalians strenuously assert. Upon this point, you appear to me, as indeed every Presbyterian writer before you has been, greatly embarrassed. And in order to involve *us* in perplexity, as well as *yourself*, you propose some questions. The first is, 'Is it certain, that by these *Angels* were meant individual ministers?' I think there can be no doubt of it. It is said expressly, that *the seven Stars are the Angels:* there were, therefore, just as many *Angels* as there were *Stars*. There were *seven* Churches, and every Church had its distinct and peculiar Angel. Besides, the descriptions of the Angels are not applicable to a multitude, unless we suppose that all the Presbyters of the respective Churches deserved the same reproof, and the same commendations, which is inconsistent with the least degree of probability.

Again, you ask, 'Supposing individuals to be meant, what is there in the word *Angel*, which ascertains its meaning to be a *diocesan* Bishop?' I answer, there is nothing. We lay no stress

whatever upon the title; but upon the address to the Angels, and upon the concurring testimony of the fathers, that these Angels were the Bishops of their respective Churches. They are addressed as having jurisdiction over both clergy and laity. This, even Blondel acknowledges. "The acts of the Church," says he, "whether they were glorious or infamous, were imputed to their *exarchs*, or chief *governors*."[d] The Angel of the Church of Pergamos is celebrated for his personal virtues; yet some neglect was imputed to him as a *governor*. *I have a few things against thee*, (saith the LORD.) *Thou hast them who hold the doctrine of Balaam. So also them who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.* And he is severely threatened, unless he repented; which proves that he had authority to correct these disorders. The same may be said of the Angel of Thyatira, who is blamed for suffering "Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce the people." And the Angel of Sardis is commanded to '*be watchful, and to strengthen those who are ready to die;*' otherwise, our LORD threatens to come on him *as a thief in the night.* Since, then, these Angels had full power of reforming abuses; since the neglect of reformation is entirely imputed to them; and since there are none joined in commission with them, whose votes were necessary to enable them to act; it is evident that they had the supreme power in their respective Churches.

But, Sir, how will all this accord with your system? When our LORD blamed and threatened the Angel of the Church of Sardis, might he not have said, "LORD, why blamest thou me? I have no more authority in thy Church in this city, than other Presbyters. We do every thing, as thou well knowest, by a plurality of votes, and those Presbyters who wish for a majority, for the purpose of beginning the work of reformation, have not yet been able to obtain it. I need not tell thee, that I am no more than the *Moderator* of the Presbytery, appointed to count their votes and keep order. Upon what dictate, then, of reason, upon what principle of justice, am I to be blamed for the defects and corruptions in the Church? As a Moderator, I have no relation whatever to the *Church;* my relation is entirely to the *Presbytery*, and there I have but a casting vote. What then can I do? Why am I addressed in particular, and threatened with excision, unless I repent? For my personal faults, I humbly beg forgiveness; but I cannot possibly acknowledge any guilt, as the *governor* of this Church, when I bear no such character." Might not the Angel of Sardis have addressed CHRIST with the strictest propriety in this manner? And does not this show, how utterly inconsistent your scheme of Church government is with these epistles? You might as well attempt to reconcile *it* with *them*, as to reconcile a *republic* with a *monarchy*.

But, upon our system, all is right. The seven *Angels* are so

d BLOND. *Apol. Pref.* p. 6. quoted by BURSCOUGH.

many individuals. They are blamed for certain corruptions in their respective Churches; and their Presbyters and Deacons are not blamed in the least. The Angels, therefore, must have had power to correct these abuses, and must have had jurisdiction over these Presbyters and Deacons. They must have had, as we have seen from Ignatius and others, the supreme power of the keys; and, consequently, the power of commissioning the inferior orders under their government. Hitherto, then, all is harmonious and consistent. The testimony of the fathers, and the testimony of these Scripture epistles, is perfectly coincident. But, upon your hypothesis, the addresses to the Angels are inconsistent with common sense and common justice, and at utter variance with the testimony of the fathers.

That the fathers accounted the seven Angels so many *diocesan* Bishops, is beyond all contradiction. So say Irenæus,[e] Clemens of Alexandria,[f] Eusebius,[g] Ambrose,[h] and others. That Polycarp was then Bishop of Smyrna, is testified by Irenæus, who knew him well; by Ignatius; by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, who calls him Bishop and Martyr in Smyrna; by Eusebius; by Tertullian; by Jerome; and by all antiquity. And Ignatius names Onesimus, as Bishop of Ephesus when he wrote, which was but about twelve years after the inditing of these epistles. It being then so evident, that one of those to whom St. John writes, under the name of *Angel*, was Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and, most probably, the other, Onesimus, Bishop of Ephesus, we may be sure that all the rest were Bishops of their respective Churches, as well as Polycarp and Onesimus. And let it be particularly noticed, that these Bishops—Bishops in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, having Presbyters and Deacons under their direction, as Ignatius testifies—Bishops who had the supreme jurisdiction, and, consequently, the power of commissioning the inferior orders in the Church—are declared by our LORD himself to be *stars in his own right hand*. This makes their office a *divine* appointment, and not, as you indiscreetly assert, 'an anti-Christian usurpation.'

'Is it necessary to say any thing more upon this point? I really think it is not. Connecting the evidence from the epistles with the chain of evidence produced from the fathers, we find the same uniform mode of government. As yet, we cannot perceive a single link in the chain wanting. No chasm appears; and, therefore, we are not reduced to the arduous, and indeed impracticable task, of accounting for a change from presbytery to episcopacy, in direct opposition to the well known principles of human nature, to the voice of history, and to every consideration which influences the minds of men, when examining the evidence of facts. That I am correct in the opinion, that a change of government was impracticable within a century or two after the apostolic age, I shall show in some subsequent

e IREN. *adv. Hær.* lib. ii. c. 3.
f *De Divit. salv.* Num. 42.
g *Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. c. 23.
h *In* 1 *Cor.* xi.

letter. And this will give me an opportunity of exhibiting to our readers, your very extraordinary tissue of fallacies, conjectures, and misrepresentations, in your eighth letter. That letter is really a master-piece of its kind.

Before I pass on to the next Scripture proof for diocesan episcopacy, it will be expedient to notice what you say of Dodwell's opinion concerning these Angels. You observe,[1] that 'in his *Paræneseis*, he explicitly renounces this opinion [that the Angels were the Bishops of the seven Churches of the proconsular Asia.] And while he expresses much uncertainty with respect to the character of these Angels, and concedes the impossibility of deciding *who* they were [were this true, it is materially different from conceding *what* they were] he rather intimates his belief that they were *itinerary legates*, sent from Jerusalem, answering to the *seven spirits*, mentioned Zechariah, chap. iv. 10.'

I really think, Sir, that of all the writers I have ever met with, you are the most unfortunate in quoting authorities. That *you* have never read the *Paræneseis* of Dodwell, I am well convinced: That *I* have never read it, I freely acknowledge. But, Sir, I have read his Life by Brokesby. In that life, I find an *abstract* of all Dodwell's writings; in particular, I find that he had a singular notion with respect to the Church of Jerusalem. He supposed that St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem, held a priority of dignity and jurisdiction over all Christian Churches, till the destruction of Jerusalem. After that period, he supposes that St. James' superiority was transferred to the Bishop of Ephesus; and that St. James first, and afterwards the Bishop of that Church, sent out *itinerate legates*, or Bishops, to propagate Christianity through the world. But "by degrees," says Brokesby, "this power came to be derived to the governors of other Churches, as to the *Angels* of the *apocalyptic* Churches."

This notion of Dodwell's is, I believe, strictly *singular;* for I have never read of any other Episcopalian that has adopted it. Learned as well as unlearned have their singularities; and Dodwell was by no means free from them. But singularities apart, it is evident from the above extract, that the pious and learned man in question, believed the Angels of the seven Churches of Asia Minor to be fixed Bishops: and that was his opinion, as you yourself acknowledge, when, some years before, he wrote his book *on Schism.*

The next scriptural proof of *diocesan* episcopacy, is taken from the first epistle of St. Paul to Timothy. The superiority of a Bishop to a Presbyter consists in *potestas ordinis* and *potestas jurisdictionis*—the power of order, and the power of jurisdiction, as the schoolmen speak. As to the former, *the power of ordaining*, that is peculiar to the Bishop, and no instance has yet appeared of Presbyters exercising that power. St. Paul

1 Letter III. p. 113.

gives it as a special charge to Timothy, to *lay hands suddenly on no man.* This would have been a very useless charge, if the Presbyters of Ephesus could have ordained; and it was really treating them very disrespectfully, not so much as to give the least hint that they had a right to co-operate in that business. The same silence is observed by the Apostle in his Epistle to Titus:—*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain Elders in every city.* From these texts the fathers observe, that none but Bishops, in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, had the power of ordaining. So say Cyprian, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Jerome, and several councils.

The next point, in which Bishops are superior to Presbyters, is *the power of jurisdiction.* That consists, first, in regulating divine service, and the administration of the sacraments. St. Paul gave Timothy this direction, that *first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and all that are in authority, that men may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.* And this power of regulating divine service, necessarily implies the chief power of administering the sacraments. Presbyters, indeed, have the power of administering the sacraments; but not without authority from the Bishop. This we are expressly taught by Ignatius, who was nearly contemporary with Timothy, and perfectly well acquainted with several, if not all the Apostles. Under this head, may be placed the Bishop's authority to prevent Presbyters from preaching false doctrine. *Charge them not to preach doctrines which rather minister questions than godly edifying.* But what was Timothy to do, if they did not obey his charge? He must *stop their mouths,* that is, silence them, as Titus was particularly directed to do. *A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition is to be rejected.* Who was to do this? *Titus;* not a word about Presbyters, or *ruling Elders.* Calvin agrees with this. *Tito scribens Paulus, non disserit de officio magistratus, sed quid episcopo convéniat.*[k] "Paul, writing to Titus, does not discourse of the office of a Magistrate, but of what is proper to a Bishop." And Jerome declares, that this power belongs to the office of a Bishop. "I wonder," (says he, speaking of Vigilantius, who propagated false doctrines,) "that the Bishop in whose diocese he is a Presbyter, hath so long given way to his impiety; and that he hath not rather broken in pieces with the *apostolic rod,* a rod of iron, this unprofitable vessel."[l] This is the very rod which was put in the hands of Timothy and Titus. It was peculiar to the Bishop in Jerome's day, and he calls it an *apostolic rod;* and, consequently, it was no usurpation.

The third and last particular of episcopal jurisdiction, is the correction of immorality, so far as it can be done by ecclesiastical censure. Both Presbyters and people, in this respect, were

k *In. Tit.* c. 3.

l HIERON. *ad Riparium adv. Vigilant.*

subject to the Bishop. St. Paul says to Timothy, *Against an Elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses;* and, *them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* Presbyters then are subject to censure; but to whose? To their brethren's? Not a word of that; but to their Bishop's, to Timothy's. The laity also were subjected to Timothy's correction. An *elderly* man, he was *to entreat as a father;* the *younger* men were to be rebuked with greater freedom, but still with lenity.

Thus, the Apostle minutely enumerates the several powers in the commission, with which Timothy was invested. And as if this were not enough, he particularly defines the limits of those powers which were conferred upon the Presbyters. When he met them at Miletus, he gave them this solemn charge: *Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and all the flock over the which the* HOLY GHOST *hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of* GOD, *which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Here is not the least intimation to these Presbyters, that their commission implied the power of ordaining; nothing, but to take care of their own conduct, and to feed with the word of life those over whom they were placed. But St. Paul gives very particular directions to Timothy, concerning the persons whom he should ordain, both Presbyters and Deacons. Is it not wonderful, that when he was about to take his leave for ever of those Presbyters, he did not say one word to them about so important a part of their duty as ordaining, if they possessed that power? "When he gives his charge to Timothy," says Bishop Hoadley, "it is in plain words, that he is to govern and ordain Presbyters. When he gives his charge to these Presbyters, it is to feed the flock of lay-Christians. Let any one observe the difference, and judge, whether these Presbyters were ever designed for the same offices for which Timothy had been set over them."

Again: "That Timothy did," says Hoadly, "after this, govern and ordain at Ephesus, and not these Presbyters, is plain from St. Paul's *second epistle* to him; in which he is supposed in the same office as in the *first;* and the like injunctions, though in more general terms, repeated concerning his behaviour in it. From whence, I think it evident beyond all contradiction, that St. Paul did not, at this time, once think of leaving the whole government, and the matter of ordination, in the hands of these Presbyters. For if that were his design and solemn act in this charge, what occasion, or what foundation could there be for him, afterwards, to take these rights away again? And how various must his judgment, and how unbecoming his behaviour appear, [and I will add, how inconsistent with the notion of his being *inspired,*] to be perpetually thus changing, first giving to Presbyters the right of ordination, then immediately restraining it; then solemnly restoring to them the right of it when he was taking his final leave; and afterwards putting the same restraint upon them again. This is incredible. And

yet this must be supposed, if there be any thing implied in the text now before us, to the purpose of the Presbyterian cause."[m]

To conclude: St. Paul gives a very solemn charge to Timothy.—*I give thee charge in the sight of* GOD, *who quickeneth all things, and before* JESUS CHRIST, *who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST.

St. Paul knew very well that Timothy would not live till the day of judgment. This charge, therefore, was not confined to the person of Timothy, but extended to the office which he held at Ephesus, and which, to make sense of the passage, we must suppose was designed to be continued to the end of time. It was of the nature of that promise which CHRIST made to his Apostles, that he *would be with them to the end of the world.* But the charge given by the Apostle to the *Elders* of Ephesus, was altogether personal; it extended not beyond their own lives. As they had no power to constitute others in their room, so there is no charge given to them *to keep what was committed to them to the coming of* CHRIST, or, *to commit what they had received, to faithful men.*

That the office which Timothy held did not expire with him, is evident from its very nature; for there is the same need of an officer now in the Church who can ordain, as there was in the days of Timothy; and accordingly we find from the testimony of antiquity that he had his successors. But with the presbyterian hypothesis, all these circumstances are palpably inconsistent.

Now, Sir, were I called upon to point out the superior powers of a Bishop in our day, it would be in the words of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus. I would say, that he alone ordains, that he has the chief power in the administration of the word and sacraments, and that in the last resort, he has the power of inflicting spiritual censures upon both clergy and people. If this superiority constitutes a Bishop in our day, what reasons can be assigned why it did not constitute *Timothy* and *Titus* Bishops? Oh! the reasons burst thick upon us!

First, 'Timothy and Titus are no where in Scripture called Bishops.' Do you intend, Sir, by this to amuse or to instruct your readers? If they *had* been so called, would you, on that account, allow them a superiority over Presbyters? You certainly would not. If you will not allow it when facts are staring you in the face, you assuredly would not on account of an ambiguous title. *Names* are not always to be depended upon; *things* always are. If Timothy and Titus had the powers of a Bishop, according to the infallible Word of GOD, of what consequence is it what they are named? As Presbyters were styled *Bishops* or *Overseers*, because they had a portion of *the flock*

m *Brief Defence*, p. 121, 122, 123.

committed to them, Timothy and Titus, who had both clergy and people committed to their charge, would, of course, have the title of προεστως, or *ruler*, or *president*. Obey (says the Apostle to the Hebrews) *those who have the rule over you*. But what, Sir, if they also had the title of *Apostles?* Does not that imply so much as the appellative, *Bishop?* Then they certainly had it. St. Paul says, that there were Apostles ordained by *men*, as well as those who were immediately sent by JESUS CHRIST. *Barnabas* was one, *Epaphroditus* another, *Titus* another. *Whether any do inquire of* TITUS, *he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you; or our brethren be inquired of, they are the Apostles of the Churches, and the glory of* CHRIST. The word Αποστολοι is indeed translated *messengers;* but that cannot be the meaning when applied to the above named persons; for they were styled *Apostles of the Churches* before they went to Corinth, from which they were to be despatched with contributions to Jerusalem. Their *Apostolate* was evidently relative to their own Churches; for Titus as a *messenger* carried the contribution, not of Crete, but of Corinth, and Epaphroditus, not that of the Philippians, but of the Colossians; and consequently, the Apostle could not, with propriety, say of Epaphroditus, *your messenger*. Besides, they are styled by St. Paul, his *fellow-labourers* and *the glory of the Church*, which would hardly have been said of them if they had not sustained some very high character in the Church of CHRIST.

I cannot see, Sir, why you should have any difficulty in acknowledging that Timothy, and Titus, and others who presided over Churches, were named Apostles, when Barnabas certainly was, and St. Paul tells us, that there were Apostles ordained by *men*, as well as by JESUS CHRIST. And, further, if the power of ordaining and a supremacy of jurisdiction, which, we say, the Apostles reserved to themselves, never communicating them to Presbyters, so far as Scripture and antiquity inform us, were conferred upon Timothy and Titus, which is as clear as if written with a sun-beam, then certainly, when raised to the rank of Apostles by the powers communicated to them, they would be styled Apostles, as well as rulers, or presidents of Churches. That this was the opinion of the ancients, you very well know. Clemens of Alexandria, Hilary, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Jerome, Primasius, all declare it to be so. And it probably continued to be given to the immediate successors of the Apostles, till about the close of the first century, when the appellative *Bishop* was appropriated to them.

Another of your observations is, that the authority which Timothy and Titus exercised at Ephesus and Crete, was in consequence of their being *Evangelists*. Now, an Evangelist, says Eusebius, "was sent to lay the foundation of the faith in barbarous nations;" that is, as the etymology of the word implies, to preach *glad tidings*, or convey *good news* to the Heathen. But this does not determine the *order* of the person who conveyed the 'good

news.' It might be done, and was done, by Apostles, Presbyters, and Deacons, and even laymen. According to your own account, when you send out a Presbyter to preach the Gospel to the Heathen, you call him an *Evangelist*, and with great propriety. So, were the rulers of our Church to send a Bishop, or a Presbyter, or a Deacon, to communicate to the Heathen the 'good news' of salvation, he would, in the strictest sense, be to them an *Evangelist;* but it would be absurd merely from this circumstance to determine his rank in the Church.

Again: In this strict sense of the word, Timothy and Titus were not *Evangelists* to the Ephesians and Cretians; for St. Paul tells us, that he had spent three years in preaching the 'glad tidings' of the Gospel to the people of the proconsular Asia; and from the Scripture it is evident that there was a Church in Crete; so that Timothy was no *Evangelist*, in the strict sense of the word, to the Ephesians, nor Titus to the Cretians. There is a wider sense, indeed, in which they were so; that is, simply as they were preachers of the Gospel; but in that sense, all preachers are Evangelists, whatever their order may be. View this objection then in whatever light you please—extract from it all that you possibly can; and still it will amount to nothing but idle cavil. The fact that Timothy and Titus were at the head of their respective Churches, presiding over Presbyters, Deacons, and laity, will stare you in the face, and no art whatever can diminish the clearness of the evidence.

Another of your objections is, that 'Timothy and Titus were not *settled pastors*, but *itinerant missionaries*. They sustained no fixed or permanent relation to the Churches of Ephesus or Crete.' Were this strictly true, still it would be nothing to the purpose. Whatever time Timothy staid at Ephesus, he ordained Elders, governed those Elders, and regulated all the affairs of the Church. This proves his superiority. Now, if it was necessary to send such an officer to Ephesus as Timothy, to ordain Elders where there were Elders before, it must have been equally necessary when he left it, that an officer of his rank should take his place for the same purpose. And, accordingly, we find from the ancients, that that was really the case: 1. From a fragment of a treatise by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, towards the close of the second century. This fragment is preserved in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, and quoted by Archbishop Usher, in his *Discourse on Episcopacy*. In that fragment, it is said, that "Timothy was ordained Bishop of Ephesus, *by the great Paul*." 2. It appears from Eusebius,[n] who says, "it is *recorded in history* [not merely *reported*, as you translate ἱστορεῖται] that Timothy was the first Bishop of Ephesus." 3. From the *Commentary* under the name of Ambrose.[o] It says, "Being now ordained a Bishop, Timothy was instructed by the *Epistle* of *Paul*, how to dispose and order the Church of God." 4. From Epiphanius,[p]

n *Eccles. Hist.* Lib. iii. cap. 4. o *Præfat. in Epist. ad Tim.* p *Hær.* 75. n. 5.

who says, "The Apostle, speaking to Timothy, being then a Bishop, advises him thus: *Rebuke not an Elder*, &c. 5. By Jerome, who, in his tract *of Ecclesiastical Writers*, says, that "Timothy was ordained Bishop of the Ephesians *by the blessed Paul.*" 6. By Chrysostom,[q] who says, "Paul directs Timothy to fulfil his ministry, being then a Bishop; for that he was a Bishop, appears from *Paul's* writing this to him, *Lay hands suddenly on no man.* 7. By Leontius,[r] Bishop of Magnesia, one of the fathers in the great council of Chalcedon, who declared, that "from Timothy to their time, there had been twenty-six Bishops of the Church of Ephesus." 8. By Primasius,[s] who says, "Timothy was a Bishop; and had the gift of prophecy with his ordination to the episcopate." 9. By Theophylact,[t] who gives this reason for St. Paul's writing to Timothy, "because that in a Church newly constituted, it was not easy to inform a Bishop of all things incident to his place, by word of mouth;" and in his Commentary on the fourth chapter of the first epistle, he styles Timothy, *Bishop.* 10. By Oecumenius,[u] who, on these words, *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus*, gives this gloss: "He ordained him Bishop." The evidence upon this point is so complete, that it obliged even Beza[w] to confess that "Timothy was president (προεστως) of the Ephesine Presbytery, and that he had authority to receive accusations and complaints against a Presbyter, and to judge accordingly."[x] But how childish is this! As if the *name* would alter the *thing*.

This is a very different statement from yours. Ah, my good Sir! how easy is it to withhold evidence, to assert roundly, and to give a specious turn to almost any thing!

But, Sir, notwithstanding the positiveness with which you assert, that Timothy and Titus had no permanent relation to the Churches of Ephesus and Crete, I shall take the liberty of asking you, who told you so?—'The Scriptures. We find Timothy travelling with Paul to Philippi and Thessalonica,' &c. That is very true; but had you considered that all these journeys were finished before Timothy was appointed Bishop of Ephesus, you would never have made the objection. There is not the least evidence from Scripture, nor from the fathers, that Timothy ever left Ephesus for any length of time, except when St. Paul sent for him to Rome, a little before his martyrdom. After that event, we hear no more of Timothy. His short absence at Rome, till the fate of his spiritual father was determined, can never be considered by any impartial person as an objection to his *permanent* residence.

I have said that Timothy's journeys, as an *Evangelist*, were finished, before he was settled at Ephesus. To prove this, and, at the same time to show that there were Elders at Ephesus

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q *Hom.* 1 *ad Tim. et in Præfat.*
r *Conc. Chal.* Act. ii.
s *In Tim.* 1 *Ep.* i. c. 4.
t *In Præfat.* 1 *Tim.*
u 1 *Tim.* c. i.
w *Annot. in* 1 *Tim.* c. v. ver. 19.
x See HEYLIN *on Episcopacy*, p. 219, 220.

when Timothy was appointed Bishop, it will be necessary to determine when that appointment took place. This will appear with sufficient evidence from St. Paul's first epistle to Timothy, in which we find these words: *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia.* Now, St. Paul's journey into Macedonia, is not that mentioned *Acts* xvi., for *then* there was no Church of Ephesus existing. Paul did not visit that city till a good while after. Nor could it be when he left Ephesus to go the second time into Macedonia, of which mention is made in the twentieth chapter; for then he sent Timothy and Erastus before him. But it was after he had stayed three months in Greece, when hearing that *the Jews laid wait for him as he went about to sail into Syria*, he changed his course, and determined to return through Macedonia. Then it was, (so far as we can judge from the very short accounts we have,) that he besought Timothy to undertake the government of the Church of Ephesus. To which, when Timothy agreed he went forward with Aristarchus and the rest, waiting at Troas in expectation of the Apostle's coming. Then it was, most probably, that Timothy received the Apostle's first epistle, being written not from Laodicea, as the subscription pretends, but from Macedonia, as you observe, after Athanasius and Theodoret among the ancients, and several eminent modern commentators. For, however the Apostle hoped to be with him shortly; yet, well knowing that untoward accidents might prevent it, he thought proper to send that letter of instructions to him, that he *might know how to behave himself in the house of* God. After that there is not the least appearance that St. Paul ever employed Timothy in any general business of the Church; or, that he was ever absent from Ephesus, except as before mentioned, during the short time he spent with the Apostle at Rome. So little support have you from Scripture, that Timothy had no permanent relation to the Church of Ephesus.

By settling the time of Timothy's appointment to the see of Ephesus, we have secured another point, which you represent as *assumed* by us without any proof; that is, that there were *Elders* at Ephesus before Timothy's appointment. I should suppose, that no one could possibly doubt of that, if there was no mention made of it, when he considers that Paul assures us, that he had spent three years preaching the Gospel throughout that region. To suppose that there were no Presbyters ordained during that time, when there were so many thousands converted to the faith, is one of those monstrous presumptions, which candid and impartial men will not admit. But, Sir, we have no need to have recourse to *a priori* reasoning. The fact is clear enough. Timothy, after he was commissioned by St. Paul to govern the Church of Ephesus, went before him to Troas, at which place Paul arrived from Philippi, in *five days*. They stayed there *seven*, Timothy going by water, and Paul by land, to Assos, where Paul embarked, and proceeded to Miletus. At

that place, the Apostle sent for the Presbyters of Ephesus and the neighbouring region. Here, then, we find Elders, before Timothy had entered upon his charge; and we find St. Paul left Miletus without Timothy, and proceeded on his voyage to Jerusalem, where he was apprehended, and sent a prisoner to Rome. After some time, he sent for Timothy, who, by the second letter, we see, was at Ephesus. After Paul's death we hear no more of Timothy in the Scriptures; and but little in the fathers; but that little reports him to have been martyred at Ephesus. And we have just produced abundant evidence from the ancients, that he had his successors. Here, then, we have such a degree of proof on the episcopal side of this question, as could hardly be expected, considering the very short accounts we have in Scripture concerning the first settlement of Churches.

With respect to Titus, whom the ancients make the first Bishop of Crete, it may not be so easy a matter to determine when his appointment took place; nor is it of any consequence to our cause, after settling the point with respect to Timothy. *For this purpose*, says the Apostle, *left I thee in Crete*, &c. Baronius'[y] conjecture is very probable. He thinks it was when St. Paul went from Macedonia to Greece, through the Egean Sea. If so, Titus' travels were nearly over. We find him, indeed, afterwards at Nicopolis, and after that at Rome, for the purpose of seeing the Apostle before his death. There he left St. Paul, and went into Dalmatia; whether for the purpose of returning by a rather circuitous route to Crete, or for whatever purpose, it is impossible to say. One thing, however, we are assured of by the ancients, that he was the first Bishop of Crete. So says Eusebius.[z] Ambrose also says, "The Apostle consecrated Titus a Bishop, and, therefore, admonishes him to be solicitous for the Church committed to him."[a] Jerome, writing on these words—*For this cause left I thee in Crete*,[b] thus applies them: "Let Bishops, who have the power of ordaining Presbyters, attend to this." Hence it is evident, that Jerome must have deemed him a Bishop, with such powers as Bishops had in his day; the chief of which was ordination. And in his *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*, he says, that "Titus, the Bishop of Crete, preached the Gospel both in that and the neighbouring islands." Theodoret says, "Titus, a famous disciple of St. Paul, was by him ordained Bishop of Crete; being a place of great extent; with a commission also to ordain Bishops under him."[c] Theophylact, in his preface to this epistle, affirms the same. Oecumenius upon the text, says, "St. Paul gave Titus authority to ordain Bishops, having first made him a Bishop."[d] Here, then, is sufficient evidence, that Titus was the first Bishop of Crete; and that he had successors to the same pre-eminence which he possessed, will admit of no dispute.

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y Ap. lvii. p. 209. z *Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. c. 4. a *Præfat. ad Tit.*
b *In Tit.* c. i. v. 5. c See HEYLIN *of Episcopacy*, p. 221. d Ibid.

With respect to there being Presbyters at Crete, when Titus was set over the Church in that island, we may very reasonably suppose it; yet, as the Scripture does not mention it, you are determined not to allow it; nor is it, Sir, of any consequence whether you do or not. It is proved with respect to Timothy; but if it had not been, it would make no difference with respect to his office. We have produced abundant evidence, that Timothy and Titus were the first Bishops of Ephesus and Crete, and that they had their successors; and from the epistles it appears, that after they had ordained Elders, they were to govern them, and all orders in their respective Churches. This is the point we wish to establish, and I think it is completely established.

Your other objections shall be considered in my next letter.

LETTER X.

REV. SIR:

I SHALL now resume my answers to your objections. Previously, I would observe, that there is nothing more easy than to start difficulties with respect to the best authenticated facts, and the most universally received opinions. There is not a single principle of religion, whether natural or revealed, to which plausible objections may not be made; nor is there any fact around which ingenuity may not spread a mist. It is unnecessary for me to give a detail of the instances of this kind: Nay, Sir, you yourself are a proof of what ingenuity can do in this sort of management. I have given sufficient evidence of the correctness of this assertion. I have shown, that what you very positively call facts, have not the least pretension to that character; and that what you object to the evidence of episcopacy, in the second and third centuries, is mere cavil and evasion. You give us another proof of this in the quotation which follows. You say, 'Admitting, for the sake of argument, that there were Presbyters ordained and residing both at Ephesus and Crete, previous to the respective missions of Timothy and Titus, still no advantage to the episcopal cause can be derived from this concession. We learn from the epistles directed to those Evangelists, that divisions and difficulties existed in both the Churches to which they were sent. Among the Christians at Ephesus there had crept in *ravenous wolves*, who annoyed and wasted the flock; and also some who had *turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to become teachers of the law without understanding what they said, or whereof they affirmed.*' And nearly the same account is given of the Church of Crete; from which you think it a probable inference, that the Presbyters themselves were 'involved in the disputes and animosities which

prevailed; and that it was, therefore, necessary to send *special missionaries* to *set in order* the affairs of those Churches.' Now, if the necessity of sending *missionaries* arose from the Presbyters being involved in the contentions, (which, however, is altogether supposition,) you pay *presbyterian* government but a very poor compliment; for it seems, according to your account of the matter, that such a mode of government is by no means adequate to the exigences of the Church. This was your friend Jerome's opinion, and it appears that you have at length discovered his meaning, and made it your own. Well, Sir, I have no objection.

Further: It seems, when there were Presbyteries completely organized in those Churches, that the Apostle sent persons invested with superior powers *to curb the unruly* Presbyters, *to reclaim the wandering* among them, 'to repress the ambition of those who wished to become *teachers*, or to thrust themselves into the *ministry*, without being duly qualified; to select and ordain others of more worthy character; and, in general, to *set in order* the affairs of those Churches.' If all this does not prove the superiority of those *special missionaries* over the *Presbyteries* of the Churches of Ephesus and Crete, it is hard to say what does.

But these are not the only difficulties in which your theory involves you. By your hypothesis, *presbyterian* government is of *divine institution*. Yet it seems, very shortly after the Apostles, under the influence of divine inspiration, had established that government, it became totally inadequate to the purposes for which it was instituted. If this be not a severe censure upon the wisdom of inspired Apostles, I do not know what is.

Still further: Timothy and Titus, if we may believe the unanimous testimony of the ancients, had successors in the authority which they exercised in the Churches of Ephesus and Crete. Then the authority which they exercised over the *presbyteries* of their respective Churches was conveyed to others; and consequently episcopacy is an apostolic institution.

It is a very natural reflection from all this, that when men leave the plain path of truth, palpable error and inextricable difficulties are the inevitable consequence.

Your fifth remark, which, you say, 'invalidates the argument under consideration,' is the following: 'We know not that either Timothy or Titus *alone* ordained a single Presbyter, at Ephesus or Crete.' Is it possible that this should have come from your pen? You tell us, that there is no evidence that there were Presbyters at Ephesus or Crete; and yet that Timothy and Titus were sent upon an *ordaining tour*. In the name of common sense, how could they have had any Presbyters to assist them, when, if you are right, there were none at Ephesus or Crete? A man, when he deals much in *surmises*, ought to have, at least, a good memory; otherwise, the probability is that he will run himself into gross and palpable inconsistencies.

You go on: 'The whole force of the Episcopal argument depends upon taking for granted, that each of those missionaries was, alone, vested with the whole ordaining and governing power, in the diocese supposed to be assigned him.' Now, I leave it to every impartial reader, whether, if, as you suppose, there were no Presbyters at Ephesus and Crete, when Timothy and Titus went to their respective charges; and when the Scriptures do not give us the slightest hint, that they took any with them; whether, I say, we have not a right to conclude, that they were the *sole* ordainers, and whether you have any right to *surmise* that they took Presbyters with them; and particularly, as the epistles, in all the directions relating to ordinations, say not one syllable about Presbyters having a right to ordain? If groundless *surmises* are to be set in opposition to the evidence, both from Scripture and antiquity, that Timothy and Titus presided over the Churches of Ephesus and Crete with episcopal powers, it is perfectly idle to dispute upon the subject. *Facts* are just what men please to fancy such, and *surmise* is proof when it suits the reader.

Your seventh remark, relating to the journeys of Timothy and Titus, which, as you imagine, disqualified them from being Bishops, has, I flatter myself, been completely answered in the preceding letter.

Your final remark upon the case of Timothy and Titus, has in it something specious; but it is totally destitute of solidity.

The substance of the remark is, that if Timothy and Titus were diocesan Bishops, then the Apostles sustained a still higher office; and, consequently, there are *four* orders in the Church instead of *three*. You had previously reasoned in the same manner in page 92.

A few words will show the fallacy of this. The Bishops of our Church consecrate A. B. a Bishop for the state of Georgia. After his departure for his diocese, sensible of the many difficulties he will have to contend with, they jointly address an epistle to him, in which they give him advice on every point that may occur—charge him in a solemn manner to *lay hands suddenly on no man*—to *receive no accusation against an Elder but before two or three witnesses*—to *reject a man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition*—to *take heed to himself and to his doctrine*, and a number of other injunctions; would all this prove that they were of a different order from the newly consecrated Bishop? Certainly not.

Besides, let it be remembered, that the Apostles, in delivering to the world the mind of CHRIST, and in regulating every thing essential either to the *being*, or *well* being of the Church, were directed by the HOLY GHOST; and then it will be evident, from the very nature of the case, that Bishops, as well as Presbyters, were to be instructed by them; but this did not make the Apostles of a superior order to Bishops. It is different orders of the ministry that we are speaking of, and, with these, inspiration

had no necessary connexion. Laymen were inspired as well as the Apostles. St. Luke has delivered to us the mind of CHRIST; but yet, so far as we know, he never was admitted into any clerical order. Bishops, as well as Presbyters, Deacons, and Laymen, were obliged to receive his Gospel as of divine inspiration; but that gave that Evangelist no authority over the clergy. The circumstance, then, of Bishops being obliged to submit to the instructions and directions of the Apostles, was of an extraordinary nature, springing out of the state of things, and, therefore, ceasing with that state.

But the case was quite different with respect to the Apostles' jurisdiction and authority over Presbyters. It was a strict and proper jurisdiction, founded not simply in the inspiration of the Apostles as with respect to the Bishops, but in their superior *sacerdotal* character. The whole power of the ministry was lodged with the Apostles: this plenitude of clerical power was communicated to the Bishops, but not to the Presbyters. This plenitude of power made the Bishops equal with the Apostles in their ordinary, permanent authority, and superior to the Presbyters; inasmuch, as but a part of that power was communicated to *them*. This was the foundation of the authority which the Apostles exercised over the Presbyters; but with respect to the Bishops, it had no existence. The Bishops were inferior to the Apostles, not in point of clerical order, but in respect to miraculous powers; the Presbyters (at least many of them) were inferior in both respects.

By this simple distinction, manifest enough in the Scriptures, particularly in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, to whom—I flatter myself it has been fully proved—this plenitude of apostolic sacerdotal power was communicated by St. Paul, and also from the whole current of the primitive writers as they have been exhibited in the preceding letters; by this simple distinction, I say, your specious dilemma proves perfectly harmless.

It is really, Sir, wasting time to make a reply to so many frivolous surmises, when the question between us is a simple matter of fact, to be determined by Scripture and the primitive writers. The sole question is, whether the Apostle's communicated that plenitude of sacerdotal power which they received from CHRIST, to the Presbyters; or restricted them to a portion of it; communicating the whole of it to those, who, from the close of the apostolic age, have been styled Bishops. No evidence has yet appeared that they communicated the whole of it to Presbyters; but, on the contrary, I think that the most complete evidence has been exhibited, that Bishops were the depositaries of that plenitude of power; and that, consequently, they are an order superior to Presbyters. If this be the case, a thousand surmises and conjectures are not of the least weight; but if that has not been fully proved from the primitive writers and the Scripture, you need not amuse your readers with *suppositions;* the fact must be evident, either the one way or the other, from what has been exhibited, either by you or by me.

The sum of what has been said upon the cases of Timothy and Titus, is this:—It has been proved, that they were sent to Ephesus and Crete to ordain Presbyters and Deacons, and to govern those officers as well as the laity, in all spiritual matters; —that those officers, from the powers of ordaining and governing, were necessarily superior to Presbyters; that Timothy and Titus were the stationary Bishops of their respective Churches; the former having never been absent that we know of, but on a short visit to St. Paul before his martyrdom, and the latter absent no longer than on a visit to the Apostle at Nicopolis and at Rome: but if Timothy and Titus had made but a short stay at Ephesus and Crete; yet, exercising the powers which they did in those Churches, they were Bishops at large. But what proves to a certainty that they were fixed Bishops, as much so, at least, as the exigencies of the Church in that day would admit, is the circumstance of their having successors in the very same authority which they exercised at Ephesus and Crete; and for the proof of this, numerous testimonies have been adduced from the fathers. It has also been shown, that it was not as Evangelists they acted at Ephesus and Crete; for an Evangelist was one who carried *good news* of salvation to the Heathen; but the people of Ephesus and Crete had been converted in great numbers to the faith of CHRIST, before the appointment of Timothy and Titus. The result of the whole then is, that these officers were Bishops in the appropriate, ecclesiastical sense of the word.

Before I conclude this part of the discussion, I shall make a few observations upon your quotation from Dr. Whitby. You say,[a] this commentator, "notwithstanding all his zeal for episcopacy, speaks on the subject in this manner. 'The great controversy concerning this, [the epistle to Titus,] and the epistle to Timothy, is, whether Timothy and Titus were indeed made Bishops, the one of Ephesus, and the proconsular Asia; the other of Crete. Now, of this matter, I confess I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name.' And afterwards he adds, generally concerning the whole argument—'I confess that these two instances, absolutely taken, afford us no convincing arguments in favour of a settled diocesan episcopacy, because there is nothing which proves they did, or were to exercise these acts of government rather as *Bishops* than as *Evangelists*.'" But why, Sir, did you not give us the whole of Whitby's words? After he had said, "I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name"—the name of Bishop; why did you not add the following words, "But this defect is abundantly supplied by the concurrent suffrage of the fourth and fifth centuries?" He then gives us a number of testimonies from writers of those ages; and which I have already given in

a Letter III. p. 97.

the preceding letter. He begins with Eusebius, who says that "it is related, or recorded in history [ἱστορεῖται] that Timothy and Titus were the first Bishops of Ephesus and Crete."

And as to Whitby's saying that "these two instances, taken absolutely, will not afford convincing proof, that Timothy and Titus acted as *Bishops* rather than as *Evangelists*;" he evidently means by the word *absolutely—unconnected with the testimonies of the ancients;* for it is by these testimonies, and by these alone, from the very circumstances of the case, that we can know that Timothy and Titus had *successors*. Had not those officers been succeeded by men, who exercised the same powers at Ephesus and Crete which they did; then, of course, that authority ceased, and they were not *diocesan* Bishops. But as that authority *did not cease*, as appears from every record of antiquity that mentions this point, it follows irresistibly, that Timothy and Titus acted as *diocesans*.

When Whitby says, that we have no testimony from any writer in the first three centuries in confirmation of the point in dispute, he certainly never meant to assert, that the testimonies of the fourth and fifth, and the following ages, do not rest upon sufficient authority. No; he meant quite the contrary; for he says, that those testimonies are quite sufficient to prove that Timothy and Titus were Bishops of Ephesus and Crete; and he knew perfectly well, that Eusebius mentions it as *a matter of historical record*, that they were so. The learned Jerome also is positive upon this point.

Thus, Sir, if you had given a fair and candid account of Dr. Whitby's sentiments, you would have found the quotations with which you have favoured us, in no degree friendly to your cause.

I shall now dismiss this part of the controversy, and discuss the transaction at Antioch, which you represent as an ordination by Presbyters.[b] *Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the* LORD *and fasted, the* HOLY GHOST *said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* 'This,' you say, 'is the most ample account of an ordination to be found in Scripture; and it is an account which, were there no other, would be sufficient to decide the present controversy in our favour.' Here, Sir, you speak with as much decision, as if the matter were perfectly clear and indisputable. But I am not at all surprised. I have lived long enough in this world to know, that bold and positive assertions are not without their effect upon the generality of readers. Few rigidly examine

b Letter II. p. 48.

the truth of an assertion; especially, when it suits their preconceived opinion.

You tell us, Sir, 'that if this be not an ordination, it will be difficult to say what constitutes one. Here were fasting, prayer, the imposition of hands, and every circumstance attending a formal investiture with the ministerial office.' But you do not consider, that it was *while they were ministering to the* LORD *and fasting*, that *the* HOLY GHOST *said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, &c.* They did not meet for the purpose of *separating* Barnabas and Saul; but while they were performing some religious acts, accompanied with fasting and prayer, they received the divine command. This circumstance completely destroys your proof from the *fasting* and *praying* mentioned in the text. And as to the imposition of hands, you certainly know that it was frequently used on other occasions, both by Jews and Christians. Jacob put his hands on the heads of Ephraim and Manasseh. And our SAVIOUR acted in like manner, when he blessed the little children which were brought unto him.

"In the case under consideration," says the ingenious Layman, "Paul and Barnabas were plainly not invested with any office; for whatever office they held after the transaction, they had held before; but a benediction was bestowed on their labours in the circuit to which they were directed to go by the HOLY SPIRIT. The transaction invested them with no new authority. It made them nothing that they were not before; which circumstance is utterly inconsistent with the idea of ordination, that being the mode of delegating power not previously possessed. This matter, however, is put out of all doubt by referring to other passages of Scripture relating to the same event. In the very next chapter, Paul and Barnabas are represented as having *fulfilled* the *particular mission* to which they had been designated by the transaction at Antioch, and as returning to give an account of the same—*And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of* GOD *for the work which they fulfilled.* Now, take these two parts of Scripture, which is the best way of proceeding in all doubtful cases, and compare them together, and all doubt about the nature of this transaction will immediately vanish. Can any thing more clearly show that it was not the *apostolic office*, but a *temporary mission* to which they had been set apart? The latter they might well represent themselves as having fulfilled; but surely not the former, it being an office that continued through life. We are here also let into the true meaning of the laying on of hands in this particular case. It was a solemn recommendation *to the grace of* GOD *for the work which they fulfilled.* When all the circumstances of the transaction, as recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the Acts, are fairly considered, there can be no sort of colour for repre-

senting Paul and Barnabas as ordained to any office, much less to the apostolic office."[c]

Further: St. Paul tells us that he was *an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by* JESUS CHRIST *and* GOD *the Father.* Now, what could render it necessary, or expedient, that St. Paul should be set apart to the apostolical office, after he had been in the exercise of that office for nine years, according to Dr. Whitby?[d] You say, 'it seemed good to the HOLY GHOST that before they [Paul and Barnabas] entered on their grand mission to the Gentiles, they should receive that kind of ordination, which was intended to be perpetual in the Church.' But do you not perceive, Sir, that this is taking for granted the very point in dispute? We say, no—they were not *ordained*, but *recommended to the grace of* GOD for a particular work, which they fulfilled, and, of which, they made a faithful report when they returned to Antioch. All the circumstances of the transaction evince this to be the case.

Still further: What more need could there have been for human hands to be laid on the heads of Paul and Barnabas, than upon the other Apostles, when they went forth to the *heathen* world? Not one of them underwent that ceremony. Even Matthias, who was chosen by lot, had not the hands of the other Apostles laid upon his head. All the text says, is, that *he was numbered with the eleven Apostles*—not a syllable about ordination *by man.* Besides, the sacred text never uses the word *ordain.—Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them*—not *ordain* me Barnabas and Saul for the *apostolical office.* Is it possible that any thing can be more clear?

Once more: Admitting, contrary to every consideration that can influence the mind in its decision, that this was an ordination; still it was an *extraordinary* case. It was done by the special command of the HOLY GHOST—*The* HOLY GHOST *said.* This would have made a valid ordination, had the ordainers been mere laymen.

You conclude your observations on this transaction in the following manner. 'But, after all, it does not destroy the argument, even if we concede that the case before us was not a regular ordination.' If it was not a regular ordination, it must certainly have been an irregular one, if it was any ordination at all. But an irregular ordination can be no example for regular ordinations. This, I believe, is acknowledged by all sober minded Christians; and none but fanatics quote extraordinary cases to justify irregularity. You go on: 'It was certainly a solemn *separation to the work to which the* HOLY GHOST *had called them.* This is the language of the inspired writer, and cannot be controverted. Now, it is a principle which pervades the Scriptures, that an inferior is never called formally to pro-

c *Miscellanies*, No. vi. p. 69, 70.

d *Annot. on Ep. to Galat.* i. 5.

nounce benediction on an official superior. It is evident, therefore, that those who were competent to set apart ecclesiastical officers to *a particular ministry*, were competent to set them apart to the *ministry in general*. So far, then, as the office sustained by Paul and Barnabas was ordinary and permanent in its nature, the Presbyters in Antioch were their equals.' Now, Sir, if there be any force in this reasoning, it may be as well applied to your hypothesis, as to ours. For if it be necessary to a formal benediction, that it should be pronounced by a *superior* upon an *inferior*, then it follows, that the *prophets* and *teachers* at Antioch, who, by your own acknowledgment, were not superior to Paul and Barnabas, could not have ordained them; for benediction always accompanies ordination. So that, according to your mode of reasoning, those Apostles could neither have been ordained nor blessed. And then the whole transaction was a mere farce. This is too shocking.

When you infer 'that those who were competent to set apart ecclesiastical officers to a *particular ministry*, were competent to set them apart to the *ministry in general*,' you involve yourself in ambiguous terms. If you mean that those who can ordain to a *particular ministry*, can also ordain to a *general ministry*, you are undoubtedly right; but if you mean that those who can by prayer *recommend to the grace of* GOD, can therefore ordain to the ministry, you are undoubtedly wrong. Mere laymen might do the former, but mere laymen cannot do the latter. There is, therefore, no connexion between them; and, consequently, your inference is not a logical result from the premise.

The truth is, the transaction before us, view it in whatever point of light you please, can never fairly be made an ordination. But if it could, it would be of no manner of service to you; for the command of the HOLY GHOST conveyed competent authority, and supplied every defect.

"It was a maxim among the Jews," says Archbishop Potter, "that *a prophet may do all things*. The meaning whereof was, that *prophets* having a particular warrant from GOD, might do things prohibited by the Mosaical law, which would be criminal for other men to attempt. It was death for any one of the other tribes to assume the office of a Levite; or for a common Levite to offer sacrifice, which was appropriated to Aaron and his sons; or for any of these to sacrifice in any other place beside the tabernacle. And yet Elijah, who was a Tishbite, *of the inhabitants of Gilead*, and does not appear to have had the least relation to Aaron's family, sacrificed a bullock upon Mount Carmel, whereof GOD declared his acceptance by consuming it by fire from heaven. And we find that Samuel anointed David, and another prophet anointed Jehu, to be kings of Israel, whilst others were in possession of the throne; which acts, if they had been performed without GOD's *express commission*, would not only have been invalid and null, but treasonable; whereas both of

them had their full force and effect, as appears from the sequel of that history. And if the command of GOD authorized prophets to break GOD's own positive precepts, and to *constitute kings*, we cannot doubt but the same command might enable them to *ordain Apostles*. But then, should another, to whom GOD has given no such commandment, take upon him, by this example, to *ordain* Apostles, and other ecclesiastical *ministers*, he would be guilty of the same offence against the Church, which private men who set up kings and magistrates, commit gainst the state."[e]

View, then, this transaction in any point of light you please; take it either as an *ordination*, or as a *benediction*, it affords not the least countenance to your hypothesis.

But you seem to think, Sir, that you derive some support from Taylor, Hammond, Lightfoot, and Chrysostom. It is true, that these writers consider this transaction as an ordination; but then, you should have been so candid as to tell your readers what they thought of the ordainers. Chrysostom says,[f] that "Paul was separated to the office of an Apostle, by the LORD;" and that, although "Manaen, Lucius, and Simeon did lay hands upon him," yet that he was "rather ordained by the HOLY GHOST." He evidently makes the whole a miraculous business; as you will see by consulting him on the place.

Hammond also considers the matter as an ordination; but then he supposed the ordainers were Bishops. This favoured his hypothesis, which, you know, was a singular one, and in which he has been followed by scarcely any Episcopalian. Whitby condemns Hammond's notion of this transaction. "He could not," says Whitby upon the place, "have had any temptation to have made the other three there named, Bishops, but that he finds them laying on of hands; imagining that was for ordination, whereas, it was by way of benediction on their enterprize only, or *to recommend them to the grace of* GOD."

You have also, Sir, given a very partial view of Lightfoot's opinion upon this point. He makes the *prophets* and *teachers* men endowed with the HOLY GHOST, because "the Church of Antioch was not yet arrived at that maturity that it should produce *teachers* that were not endowed with the HOLY GHOST, and the gift of prophecy."[g] Men thus endowed, guided and directed by special revelation, were certainly competent to commission any officers whatever in the Christian Church; but to build upon this extraordinary case, even if it were an ordination, the right of Presbyters to commission men to minister in holy things, is taking such a liberty as ought not to be taken upon any principle of Scripture, any usage of the Church, or any dictate of reason.

Bishop Taylor is another writer whom you quote, as favouring your opinion concerning the transaction at Antioch. But you

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e *Church Government*, p. 269, 270. f *Hom.* 27 *in Act.* g *Works*, Vol. II. p. 684.

should have observed, that Taylor considers the ordainers as more than Presbyters. He appears to have been of Lightfoot's opinion, that the ordainers were all *Prophets*, or prophetical teachers, and that it was in effect an ordination by the HOLY GHOST.

I shall now conclude with the words of the learned and pious Dr. Doddridge: "That they [Paul and Barnabas] were now vested with the *apostolic office*, by these inferior ministers, is a thing neither credible in itself, nor consistent with what Paul himself says, *Gal.* i. 1.: *Paul, an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by* JESUS CHRIST, *and* GOD *the Father, who raised him from the dead.* And that they now received a power before unknown in the Church, is inconsistent with *Acts* xi. 20, 21., and upon many other considerations, appears to me absolutely incredible." And, upon the words—*By the* HOLY GHOST, he says, "This seems to be added to remind us, that though they were solemnly recommended by the *prayers of their brethren*, their authority was not derived *from them*, but from the HOLY SPIRIT himself."

When, Sir, you make this transaction an ordination, you appear to me to forget one of the proofs which the advocates of parity give for the propriety of the opinion, that the apostolic office was not transmissible, because it was immediately given by JESUS CHRIST himself. If this be correct, the imposition of hands at Antioch could not have been for the purpose of conveying apostolic authority; and if not for this purpose, it could not be for any thing but to *commend* Paul and Barnabas *to the grace of* GOD. This is *argumentum ad hominem*, and it concerns you to answer it.

Perhaps you will say, as some have, when pressed with these difficulties, that it was an ordination to a special ministry among the Gentiles. But that could not have been the case, for two very good reasons: the one is, that the commission given to the Apostles, authorized them to preach the Gospel *to all nations;* consequently St. Paul had full authority to preach to the Gentiles, without a particular ordination by human hands. And, secondly, that in fact, St. Paul did not wait for any such ordination before he preached to the Gentiles; for he himself informs us, that *immediately he consulted not with flesh and blood*, nor repaired to the Apostles at Jerusalem; but went from Damascus the contrary way, into Arabia, where he remained three years, preaching to the Heathen. There is, then, no point of light in which this transaction can be viewed, that affords any ground for supposing it to have been an ordination. It could, therefore, have been nothing but a solemn benediction.

I have dwelt the longer upon this point, because you seem to lay great stress upon it, and because you advance your opinion with the utmost degree of confidence.

The next instance of ordination by Presbyters, is that of Timothy. But as this will require a good deal of discussion, I shall

postpone it to the instance you quote of Paul and Barnabas proceeding through the cities of Lystra, Iconium, &c. and *ordaining Elders in every Church.* Your quoting this as a proof of Presbyterian ordination, astonishes me. In the preceding article, you endeavoured to prove that St. Paul was ordained at Antioch. To what was he ordained? If to any thing, it was to the apostolic office. Now, to whatever St. Paul was ordained, Barnabas also was ordained; for, certainly, there is not the least shadow of distinction made between them. St. Paul also speaks of Barnabas as a person in the same station with himself. *Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the* LORD *and Cephas? And I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?* These words suppose Barnabas to have been St. Paul's colleague, and St. Paul to have had equal power with the most eminent Apostles; and both to have been clothed with the authority of the apostleship; otherwise, St. Paul's expostulation would have been nothing to the purpose.

Again: The Scriptures, speaking of Paul and Barnabas, while they were together, ever styles them *Apostles;* and no kind of distinction whatever is made between them. Thus, *Acts* xiv. 4. *But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles,* [Paul and Barnabas.] And again: *Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes,* &c.

So evident is it, that Barnabas was an Apostle, in the same sense in which St. Paul was, that even Salmasius, a great opponent of episcopacy, could not resist the evidence. He approves of the passage quoted from the reputed Ambrose, by Amalarius, in which it is asserted, that they who were ordained to govern the Churches after the Apostles, finding themselves not equal to their predecessors in miracles, or other qualifications, would not challenge to themselves the name of Apostles; but the titles of Bishops and Presbyters they thus divided. That of Presbyters they left to others, and that of Bishops was appropriated to them who had the power of ordination; so that they presided over churches in the fullest right.[h]

How consistent this is with Salmasius' opposition to episcopacy, the reader will readily perceive. But the truth was too powerful for him—he could not resist it.

This is not the only instance in which Salmasius has done justice to the truth, although to the utter ruin of his own cause. For, in his dissertation against Petavius,[i] he proves that there were many secondary Apostles, as we call them for distinction sake, who were the disciples of the first. And these, he tells us, governed the Churches with equal right and power, and in the same manner as the first had done. He also ascribes to them

h See BURSCOUGH *on Church Government,* under the title, 'The office of Apostles was communicated to many besides the twelve.'

i WALO MESSALIN. c i.

the same place over Presbyters that Bishops had in succeeding times. So that, according to him, there were always prelates since the days of CHRIST, differing indeed in name and circumstances, in the first ages, but not in authority." Such is the testimony of an adversary.

If you consult writers of the greatest note amongst the advocates of presbyterian parity, you will find them conceding that Epaphroditus, whom St. Paul calls an Apostle, was more than a *messenger*. Blondel[k] reckons him amongst the chief governors of Churches; and for this he quotes Pacianus, Jerome, and Theodoret; and he might have added Hilary. Walo Messalinus approves of this; for, he says, "Epaphroditus was called the Apostle of the Philippians, as St. Paul was of the Gentiles, and Peter the Apostle of the circumcision." He mentions the contrary opinion, but then adds, "To me it seems to have no appearance of truth, since I know that the word Apostle is never used by St. Paul, nor by other Apostles and Evangelists, but for a sacred ministry."[l]

It has always, Sir, appeared to me an unwarrantable liberty in our opponents, to assert, directly in the face of Scriptural evidence, that the apostolic office was not designed for perpetuity. In what did that office consist? It consisted in preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments, ordaining ministers, and exercising supreme authority in the Church. This was the whole of their commission, as we have it in Scripture; although, no doubt, afterwards, they had much instruction given them upon that head. One part of this commission we find in *John* xx. 21, 22, 23, and the other in *Matthew* xxviii. 19, 20, and in *Mark* xvi. 15. This sacerdotal commission was to be conveyed by the Apostles to others, and so on *to the end of the world;* for CHRIST had assured his Apostles that he would be with them, that is, with the authority he had just given them, *to the end of the world.* This secures the apostolic office in the Church as long as there shall be a Church upon earth. One would suppose, that there could be no dispute among Christians upon this point. But here lies the fallacy. The miraculous powers of the Apostles are confounded with their authority, when they are as different things as the qualifications for an office and the office itself. The propagation of the Gospel, at first, required that its ministers should be endowed with extraordinary gifts; otherwise, the powers of the world would, in all probability, have been too mighty for them. These extraordinary powers were then the means vouchsafed to the Apostles to ensure success to their ministry; but they made no part of the commission with which the Apostles were entrusted. Their commission was complete the moment it was given to them, but their extraordinary qualifications were not vouchsafed till some time after: and

k BLONDEL'S *Apology*, sect. ii. p. 85.
l WALO MESSALIN. c. i. 57—60, as quoted by BURSCOUGH.

if those qualifications had never been given, they would have been as much CHRIST's Apostles as with them. They would indeed have had much greater difficulties to contend with; but this has no kind of connexion with the idea of a commission; no more than the qualifications you possess for the office you bear, enter into the idea of the authority implied in that office. What can be more evident than this? Besides, miraculous powers were not peculiar to the Apostles. Inferior ministers, and even laymen possessed them. It was an age of wonders.—'But the Apostles spoke with tongues.' So did many others, as appears from the epistles to the Corinthians. 'They delivered to men the mind of CHRIST, and were, in so doing, infallible.' So did St. Luke, who, so far as we know, was nothing but a layman: So did St. Mark, who was the first Bishop of Alexandria, but not one of the twelve. 'The Apostles saw CHRIST in the flesh.' So did others; about *five hundred brethren at once.* 'The Apostles were not confined to a particular district, as *diocesan* Bishops are.' This is not true; as appears from the case of St. James, if he was one of the twelve. But supposing it to be so, it is nothing to the purpose; for a Bishop at large is as much a Bishop as one confined to a diocese. Would you be less a Presbyter than you are, were you to be employed all your life in preaching the Gospel to the numerous tribes of Indians on this continent? It is astonishing that men of sense can descend so low as to make such ridiculous objections to the transmission of the apostolic office. The *office* is essential to the existence of the Church of CHRIST; but the *extraordinary qualifications* to render that office effectual to the conversion of the world, have long since ceased. The continuance of the former was, therefore, promised by CHRIST himself, whose word cannot fail; but the continuance of the latter was not promised, because infinite wisdom did not think it necessary. This is the broad line of distinction established by the Scriptures, and by the very nature of the case.

Upon this head there seems to be something like an accommodation between us. In your third 'letter'[m] you divide the ministry of the Apostles into *extraordinary* and *ordinary.* The latter you say was transmitted; but the former ceased with the lives of the Apostles. Just so we say; but here lies the fallacy. You apply the word *ministry* both to the qualifications and to the commission; by which you mean to convey to your readers the idea of an extraordinary and ordinary commission; and as the extraordinary ceased with the lives of the Apostles, then it will follow that there could be no succession but to the ordinary part of the apostolic commission, and consequently, Barnabas, Epaphroditus, and others, could not have been invested with ministerial or sacerdotal powers equal to those of St. Paul. But the reasoning which I have offered does, to my mind, com-

m Page 88.

pletely prove all this to be mere sophistry. For it was the *commission* that gave the Apostles their *primacy* in the Church, and not their *qualifications*. It was the *commission* which made them superior to Presbyters, Deacons, and laymen, and not their inspiration and power of working miracles, and speaking with tongues; for the very laity possessed these powers. Barnabas, then, if he were even destitute of some, or of all these extraordinary powers, by being invested with the same commission that St. Paul was, became thereby an Apostle, in the proper sense of the word; and not as you say, 'in a vague and general sense—as a messenger, chosen either by the twelve or by the Churches themselves, to go to distant places, on special errands.' Let any one read the history of Paul and Barnabas' travels, and then point out in what respect the latter was inferior to the former, *as a minister of* CHRIST. Barnabas is always styled an Apostle. St. Paul always speaks of him as his colleague, as entitled to the same privileges with himself. He appears to have exercised precisely the same ministerial authority that Paul did. And in the contention which took place between them about Mark, Paul exercised no authority over Barnabas; they debated the matter upon equal terms, and parted from each other without any mark of superiority in Paul, or of inferiority in Barnabas.

From these reasonings and Scripture proofs, I think we may fairly conclude, with all antiquity, that Barnabas held the rank of an Apostle in the Christian Church, and, consequently, that the ordinations which Paul and he performed, were episcopal, and not presbyterian.

Keeping these things in mind, and adverting to the proofs which I have given, that the transaction at Antioch was not an ordination, our readers will be able to appreciate the correctness of your concluding sentences.—'The supposition that he [Barnabas] bore an ecclesiastical rank above that of Presbyter, is effectually refuted by the fact that he was himself ordained by the Presbyters of Antioch. As a Presbyter, therefore, he ordained others, and the only rational construction that can be given to the passage renders it a plain precedent for presbyterian ordination.'

In your third 'letter,'[n] you say, 'the whole argument for the superiority of Bishops, drawn from their being considered as the proper and exclusive successors of the Apostles in their official pre-eminence, has been pronounced invalid, and wholly abandoned by some of the most distinguished writers of the Church of England. In this list are found the names of Dr. Barrow, Mr. Dodwell, Bishop Hoadley, and others of equal eminence.' I shall begin my next letter with the consideration of this assertion.

n Page 93.

LETTER XI.

REV. SIR:

I AM now to consider your assertion, that Dr. Barrow, Mr. Dodwell, and Bishop Hoadly have given up the argument drawn from the succession of Bishops to the apostolical pre-eminence; or, in other words, that they deny that the apostolical commission was conveyed to others.

Now, Sir, from the very nature of the case, I cannot suppose this assertion is correct. For as in the first age there were in the Church, Apostles, Presbyters, or *Overseers*, and Deacons, there could not have been in the next age, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, unless the Bishops succeeded to the apostolic pre-eminence, either in whole or in part. For an Episcopalian, therefore, to give up this point, is to give up the cause, or, at least, to be very inconsistent.

First, for Dr. Barrow. Here, Sir, as usual, you give us no reference. It is enough, it seems, for you to assert; we must implicitly receive your assertions. I am as willing to be patient as any man; but there is a point beyond which patience will not hold out. I will, however, do my best to bear with this unscholar-like management, and will turn over folio pages with all the calmness I am master of, to ascertain the correctness of your assertions. I have done this in respect of Barrow, and the result is in no degree in your favour.

This author, if I understand him, maintains the succession of Bishops to the pre-eminence of the Apostles, in what was permanent in their office, as much as any Episcopalian. In his *Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy*, he quotes several assertions of the fathers to that purpose, of which he approves. Thus, page 609: "They deem all Bishops to partake of the apostolical authority, according to that of St. Basil to St. Ambrose; 'the LORD himself hath translated thee from the judges of the earth to the prelacy of the Apostles.'" Again: "They took themselves all to be Vicars of CHRIST, and judges in his stead." And again: "The Bishops of any other Churches founded by the Apostles, in the fathers' style, are successors of the Apostles, in the same sense, and to the same intent, as the Bishop of Rome is by them considered the successor to St. Peter,"[a] &c. Once more: "The Bishops of Jerusalem, successors of St. James, did not thence claim, I know not what kind of extensive jurisdiction, yea, notwithstanding their succession," &c. A number of other passages might be adduced, asserting the succession of the Bishops to the Apostles, in that sense in which alone it can be asserted, viz. their succession to that superiority over all orders in the Church, which the Apostles possessed. To their singular gifts, indeed,

a Page 610.

Dr. Barrow maintains, as every other Episcopalian does, there was no succession. Their inspiration, their power of working miracles, their speaking a variety of tongues, were not, to be sure, communicated with their commission. But these are ever to be carefully distinguished; and then there will not be the least foundation for asserting that the commission of the Apostles ceased with their lives. There is the same necessity now, that there ever was, for every particular implied in the apostolic commission. The Church of CHRIST cannot exist without it; accordingly, you ascribe to your Presbytery the whole authority implied in the apostolic commission. We ascribe but *a part* of it to the Presbyters, and *the whole* of it to the Bishops. This is the *jugulum causæ;* [the turning point of the cause;] and when this shall be once settled, the dispute must come to an end.

It is one of the extraordinary circumstances that has always occurred in the discussion of this subject, that our opponents at one time assert that the apostolical commission was to be continued in the Church; and that, accordingly, it was actually conveyed to the Presbyters; but, when we say, No, it was not communicated to the Presbyters *in toto*, [entirely,] but to the Bishops; then they tell us, that the apostolical commission was to cease with the lives of the Apostles, and flourish away about their *extraordinary* powers, as if these made any part of their commission; making no distinction at all between the wonderful qualifications of the Apostles for executing their commission, and the commission itself. By this artful management, a mist is spread around a subject, that is in itself perfectly clear. In civil affairs, this confusion never takes place. No one ever confounded great qualifications for a civil office, with the office itself. Is not this perfectly obvious? Is there any room for mistake upon this point? Do we ever mistake in regard to civil affairs?—Never.

Conformably to this unfair procedure, our opponents, whenever they meet with an episcopal writer who denies a succession to the extraordinary qualifications of the Apostles, never fail to tell us that some of our own writers give up the pretence of Bishops succeeding to the apostolic commission, and their 'Christian brethren' have no difficulty whatever in believing it. But if you ask those persons to what their Presbyters succeed, they tell you at once, that they succeed to all that is contained in the commission given by CHRIST to his Apostles. And thus, what they deny to our Bishops, they ascribe to their own Presbyters. This, Sir, appears to me to be precisely your mode of reasoning. Barrow and others deny a succession to what was extraordinary in the apostolical character; and, therefore, you infer, that they deny a succession to the apostolic commission. This is a *non sequitur;* there is not the least connexion between the two propositions. Barrow, we have now seen, does not answer your purpose at all. Let us next see how it is with Dodwell and Hoadly.

In looking over Dodwell's *Discourse concerning the one Priesthood, and one Altar*, I find the following passages directly in point against you. Speaking, page 244, of the mode of reasoning of the primitive fathers against the *heretics* of their day, he observes, that "they insist on no testimony of any Church, as competent for this purpose, but of those alone which had at first received their traditions immediately from the Apostles themselves in person, and insist on no *succession* of Bishops as competent for deducing such a testimony to their own times, but only such *successions*, whereof the first were contemporary with the Apostles themselves, that such Bishops might receive their traditions immediately from the Apostles, as well as their Churches."

My second quotation is from the same book, page 389. Speaking of God's instituted covenanting symbols, by which he bound himself to ratify what is represented in his name, he asks, "What can be requisite for deriving this appointment at a distance, but an *uninterrupted succession* from them who had it *immediately?* What more had those earlier ages themselves for it? What more can our adversaries themselves pretend; at least, what more can they rationally account for, without enthusiastic pretences to new revelations? And do not our Bishops plead the same argument of *succession?* Nor is it any matter *in law* for weakening the claim, at what distance this *succession* be deduced, so that it be still deduced through unquestionable hands. No matter how long *the chain* be, so *the links* be entire, and equal to the burden supported by it."

Another passage to my purpose I find in Dodwell's *second Letter to Baxter*, p. 219. He observes of the Bishops of the third century, that they "are such as are called *successors of the Apostles*. And that by these *successors of the Apostles*, single persons are understood in the language of that age, appears in that, when they prove *succession* from the Apostles, they do it by *catalogues of single persons*, as those in Irenæus, Tertullian, &c. and that Bishops in the confined sense are so frequently said to be *successors of the Apostles*, which is not said of *simple Presbyters*. See St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 42, 65, 69."

Nor will you, Sir, fare one tittle better with respect to Hoadly. I did but just open his book *on the Reasonableness of Conformity*, when I found, page 4th, the following striking passage. "We think we can demonstrate that in the primitive times, the administration of ecclesiastical affairs was in the hands of the Bishops, who had Presbyters subject to them. That as the Apostles maintained a superiority over the Presbyters of the Churches they constituted, so upon occasion of their absence, they settled others in this superiority. That as these thus *succeeding the Apostles* had the power of ordination committed to them, so their *successors* in the following ages claimed this power as their right, and looked upon ordination to be their *office* in the regular course of things. No wonder, then, that

appears, that the person who uses the words by which the commission is conveyed, is the sole ordainer, and that the others who *lay on hands*, let them be even Apostles, or Bishops, do no more than express approbation. For the officer who uses the words conveying the commission, either has the power singly to invest the ordained with valid authority, or he has not. If he has not, then the others who concur with him have not; for fifty cyphers will not make a unit. If he has, then the hands of the others are totally unnecessary, merely, as to the conveyance of the commission; although not so as to the solemnity and dignity of the transaction, and for the purpose of expressing approbation. Accordingly, it is a matter that is not disputed among Presbyterians, whether a single Presbyter would not convey as valid authority as a hundred united; nor among Episcopalians, whether the consecration of Bishop by a single Bishop, would not be as valid as by a plurality. The consecration, indeed, would not be canonical; but that is a very different consideration. The canons of the Church rest upon ecclesiastical authority; but the validity of the commission upon the competency of the ordainer, and ultimately upon divine authority. A number of ordainers is, therefore, unnecessary, and there is nothing added thereby to the validity of the commission conveyed by the presiding officer. St. Paul, then, was not guilty of a violation of modesty, when he ascribed to himself Timothy's ordination. He was the ordainer, and the others, whether Apostles, or Presbyters, expressed nothing more than approbation, or concurrence. If this distinction be correct, it is needless to dispute about the meaning of the word Presbytery.

My first answer, then, is, that it can never be proved by Scripture, nor by any mode of reasoning whatever, that the word *presbytery*, in the text in question, means a company of mere Presbyters.

As a farther proof of the correctness of this distinction, let it be kept in mind, that it has been proved from the holy Scripture, that Timothy was sent to Ephesus to ordain Presbyters, to govern those Presbyters, and also the Deacons and the laity; to inflict censure upon both clergy and people; in short, to superintend and direct all the affairs of that Church. I believe there never was a Presbyterian writer who denied this. Indeed, there is no room for any difference of opinion upon the subject; but as this would put an end to the dispute, it must be evaded, some how or other. Accordingly it is said, that Timothy's superiority at Ephesus was founded upon his character as an Evangelist; and as the office of an Evangelist was extraordinary, it ended with the apostolic age. But it has been shown, that this is bold, gratuitous assertion—a mere shift to get rid of an uncontrollable fact. It has been shown, that from the very nature of the office, it must continue as long as there are any nations to be converted to the faith of CHRIST; that, at any rate, Timothy could not be an Evangelist to the Christians at Ephesus, when St. Paul sent

him to govern that Church; and that (which is perfectly decisive) he had successors in the very same authority which he exercised. This, then, being the case, it proves almost to a demonstration, that Presbyters were not invested with the power of ordaining; and, consequently, the presbytery which laid hands on Timothy was composed, either altogether of Apostles, or (to make the utmost concession) of Presbyters with an Apostle at their head. Now these Presbyters either did or did not ordain. If they did, then they conveyed, as clearly appears from the epistles to Timothy, what they did not possess, which is palpable absurdity. If they did not ordain, then they expressed nothing but *approbation;* and this proves the distinction between μετα [with] and δια [by] to be just and proper. So that if I even concede, for the sake of argument, that the presbytery was composed of St. Paul and a number of mere Presbyters, you are as far from your object as ever. St. Paul was the ordainer, and the Presbyters expressed only concurrence.

As a further proof of the presumptive kind, that the presbytery was composed either of a few of the primary Apostles, or, which is equally probable, of St. Paul and a few secondary Apostles, as some of the ancients called them, or Apostles *of men,* as the Scriptures style them, we have the opinion of some of the most learned of the fathers. Chrysostom, in his commentary upon the place, says, that the presbytery was composed of St. Paul and some other Apostles. Theophylact and Oecumenius understand the matter as Chrysostom did, and the reason they assign is, that Presbyters cannot ordain a Bishop. Ignatius, too, in his epistle to the Philadelphians, calls the *Apostles alone,* the *presbytery of the Church,* although he generally gives the name to the Presbyters as the Bishop's council. The author of the Ethiopic version, says Potter,[b] understood the matter thus, as *the hands of the presbytery* are translated *the hands of the Bishops.* "There has not," continues he, "been produced so much as one example in the first three centuries of any mere Presbyters imposing hands on Bishops, and much less without them, in any ordination whatever. In the latter end of the fourth century, the fourth council of Carthage decreed, that, in the ordination of Presbyters, all the Presbyters present should lay on their hands near the Bishop's hands.[c] The design of which canon seems to have been, that the ordination of Presbyters should be performed with solemnity and deliberation, and to prevent Bishops from admitting into this order any whom their clergy did not approve; but there is not the least intimation, that the validity of orders was thought to depend on the Presbyters imposing their hands. In the same council it was ordered, that the Bishop only should lay on his hand in the ordination of Deacons. In the ordination of Bishops there is never any mention of Presbyters imposing their hands,

b *Church Government,* p. 272. c Canon iii. Presbyter cum ordinatur, &c.

either before the making the forementioned canon, or afterwards. However, the custom of allowing Presbyters to lay on their hands with the Bishop in the ordination of Presbyters, was introduced by degrees into most of the Western Churches; but in the Oriental Churches, they have still kept up the more ancient practice of excluding the Presbyters from having any concernment in ordination."

It appears to me, Sir, to be incredible, that if Presbyters had a right to ordain, the whole Church of CHRIST, in the purest and best ages, should have been totally ignorant of it. The text of Scripture now in dispute, if *your* sense of it had prevailed among the primitive Christians, would necessarily have been a warrant to them to admit the validity of Presbyterian ordination. They could not have mistaken the meaning of the text, because they had before their eyes traditionary practice to illustrate it. The second century would have known the practice of the first: thousands having lived to the middle of that century, who were born in the first; and thousands lived in the third century who were born in the second. So that the primitive Christians had the best possible commentary upon this text—even ocular demonstration. Had it been a text which involved no rite, no practice of the Church, it would have been materially different; there would then have been room for mistake, as tradition will seldom convey the meaning of *words* with correctness. But a traditionary *fact* is a very different thing. It is considered by all denominations of Christians, a strong argument against the enemies of revelation, that certain rites were instituted by Moses as monuments of particular deliverances vouchsafed by GOD to the Israelites. The same may be said with respect to the institutions under the Gospel. "The histories of Exodus and the Gospel never could have been received, if they had not been true; because the institution of the priesthood of Levi, and of CHRIST; of the Sabbath, of the Passover, of Circumcision, of Baptism, and of the LORD'S Supper, &c. are there related, as descending all the way down from those times, without interruption."[d] Just so it is with respect to ordination by Bishops. That rite, always performed by this order of ecclesiastics, was a proof of original imparity. Consult the fourth century, and you find that rite administered by Bishops; and that it was not only the *practice* of the Church in that age, but also the *avowed sentiment* that it had been so from the beginning of the Christian Church. Consult the third century, and you find the same *rite* performed by the same persons, and the same testimony to its divine origin. Consult the second century, and you find the same rite, and the same testimony; and in a particular manner, you find a venerable Bishop, the pious and martyred Ignatius, who lived a great part of his life in the apostolic age, and who was personally acquainted with some of the Apostles, declaring,

d *Scholar Armed*, Vol. I. p. 24.

a little before his death, to the Christians of his time, that all spiritual power in the Church was derived from the Bishop, and, consequently, that none performed the rite of ordination but Bishops. Here, then, we have a rite performed by a certain order of ministers from its first institution, and handed down through every age of the Church, without any dispute, till the sixteenth century. Can you find, Sir, a better commentary upon the text in question than this? Will you suffer an obscure word to influence your judgment, in opposition to this sure guide? Will not the epistles to Timothy, in which it appears to be the fact, that he alone was the ordainer in the Church of Ephesus, in connexion with the practice and testimony of the second, third, fourth, and all succeeding centuries, be esteemed an infallible explanation of the word *presbytery*. I am certain, that if we had light thrown in a similar manner upon many obscure passages of Scripture, we should think the meaning very well ascertained; and if no particular hypothesis stood in the way, Christians of all denominations would meet one another in the same interpretation. Whence arises the opposition in this case? Why is not consistency preserved? Why is not the same degree of evidence considered as conclusive in the one case, as in the other? What can it be but the love of hypothesis, which fills men's heads with false views, and their reasonings with false consequences?

But it seems there is to be no end of misrepresentation, nor of attaching consequence to what has none. You assert, that if Paul was the sole ordainer, it will follow 'that one Bishop is sufficient for the regular (you should have said *valid*) ordination of another Bishop, which is opposed to every principle of episcopal government, as well as to the established canons, so far as I know, of every Church on earth.'

I really, Sir, wonder at this observation. You must certainly know, that Episcopalians consider the consecration of a Bishop by a single Bishop perfectly valid, and that the custom of performing the rite by two, or three, is merely a matter of expediency. It would not, indeed, be agreeable to the canons of our Church; but that affects not the validity of the ordination in the slightest degree. I am persuaded that this is the opinion of every Presbyterian upon earth, with respect to the validity of ordination by a single Bishop, or a single Presbyter. Had you used the word *valid* instead of the word *regular*, the incorrectness of the observation would be too palpable for the most cursory reader to overlook.

It is strange, Sir, to me, that you should be so totally forgetful of your own assertions, as you have been in this and other instances. You maintain that there were no Presbyters at Crete, when St. Paul sent Titus to govern that Church; nor at Ephesus, when Timothy was sent thither for the same purpose. Pray, Sir, who were joined with them when they ordained the first Elders? You have not the shadow of proof that there were any,

And yet, you seem to be desirous to impress upon the minds of your readers the notion, that a plurality of ordainers is necessary to a valid ordination. Strange inconsistency!

But there is no end to cavilling. You tell us, that the supposition of St. Paul, with a number of Presbyters, laying their hands on Timothy, 'will be fatal to the episcopal cause.' For let it be remembered, that all Episcopalians, in this controversy, take for granted, that Timothy was, at this time, ordained a *diocesan* Bishop. But if this were so, how came Presbyters to lay their hands on him at his ordination? We know that Presbyters in the episcopal Church, are in the habit of laying on their hands with those of the Bishop in ordaining Presbyters; but was it ever heard of in the Christian Church, after the distinction between Bishops and Presbyters arose, that those who admitted this distinction, suffered Presbyters to join with Bishops by imposing hands in the consecration of a Bishop? No; on episcopal principles this would be an irregularity of the most absurd and inadmissible kind.'

Now, Sir, before you came to this conclusion, you ought to have proved, 1st. That the two texts in question do certainly relate to ordination. 2d. If they do, that the presbytery signifies a number of mere Presbyters, and not a number of Apostles, either primary or secondary. 3d. That, if mere Presbyters, with an Apostle at their head, laid their hands on Timothy, the authority which was conveyed to him, was not conveyed solely by the Apostle, who was confessedly the superior officer, but also by the Presbyters, over whom Timothy was to preside. 4th. If this latter be the case, then you should have removed the absurdity which results from inferiors ordaining a superior. And, lastly, you should have shown, that this ordination of Timothy was to the office of a Bishop, and not of a Presbyter, and that the presbyterate was the highest grade to which he ever attained. Unless you can make out all these particulars, you do nothing to the purpose: but I believe you will find it a very hard matter to prove these points. *Hic labor, hoc opus est.*

But let it be admitted, that Timothy was ordained a Bishop, and not a Presbyter, at this time; yet, no absurdity results from mere Presbyters laying on their hands at the same time; as Episcopalians maintain, that St. Paul was the ordainer, and that the Presbyters only added to the solemnity, and expressed their approbation of the transaction. That this is not the practice in the ordination of a Bishop now, is merely a circumstance of ecclesiastical regulation; nor would the highest Episcopalian in the world conceive the consecration of a Bishop in the smallest degree marred, by two or three Presbyters laying on their hands at the same time with a single Bishop; as they would ascribe the conveyance of the episcopal authority solely to the Bishop, who alone uses the words of conveyance, and whose hands alone would be sufficient without those of other Bishops.

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e Page 54.

There cannot, to my mind, be a stronger proof of the correctness of the opinion, that the presbytery in one of these texts, supposing it to refer to ordination, was composed of St. Paul and two or three other Apostles, or at least *apostolical men*, as the first Bishops were called, than the circumstance that Presbyters never were known to have laid on their hands at the consecration of a Bishop, and until the fourth century, not even at the ordination of a Presbyter. It is inconceivable how this could have been the case, if your interpretation of these texts be right. Certainly the ancients had better means of knowing how this matter stood, than any moderns can have; and as they were remarkably tenacious of apostolical institutions, it is inadmissible, that they laid aside the apostolical practice, when there is not the least hint of the kind. To consider the word *presbytery* alone a proof of the correctness of your opinion, is taking for granted the very point in dispute; and I hope, as a scholar, you will not have recourse to such an expedient.

The result from what has been said upon the two texts in question, is, I think, fairly this:—We cannot prove that these passages have any relation at all to ordination; or if it be conceded that they have, it cannot be determined from Scripture, what the meaning of the word *presbytery* is; as it is never used in an ecclesiastical sense but in one of these texts. But if we will take antiquity for our guide, we shall find that several of the most distinguished fathers are of opinion, that the word in that place means a plurality of Apostles; but what is of more weight, we have no example for near four hundred years of Presbyters joining with Bishops, in the ordination of Presbyters; and none to the present day in ordaining a Bishop, which never could have been the case upon your hypothesis. But what is of still more weight, your sense of the word is utterly inconsistent with the *Epistles to Timothy;* from which it is as evident as the sun in the firmament, that Presbyters had not the power of ordination. These considerations are of such moment, that I think it may be said with truth,—the balance is greatly in favour of our side of the question.

But as there is no probability that we shall meet one another upon this point, the least I think you can do, as a reasonable and candid opponent, is to consider these texts as involved in some degree of obscurity; and, therefore, upon every fair principle of criticism, not affording sufficient ground for either your practice or ours. It is conceded by all men of sense, that no doctrine should be founded upon a single passage of Scripture, when that passage is not perfectly clear in itself; and especially when there are strong objections upon other grounds to any particular sense given to it. I cannot suppose that you will not readily accede to the correctness of this observation, and if we both govern ourselves by it, our readers will have a fairer view of the controversy than they otherwise would have. In the whole progress of this dispute, I have intended, and I believe my inten-

tion has been fulfilled, not to infer any thing upon incompetent evidence—not to rest the point contended for upon any single evidence—to pay no regard to any obscure passage in the fathers—to indulge in no surmises—to place no dependence upon names; and to exhibit no evidence that would not be deemed sufficient proof for any other matter of fact, were there no interest of any kind to be served by it. Upon these grounds, I reject the interpretation which you give of these texts; and although I think our interpretation well supported, yet I am willing, in order to prevent endless disputation, to relinquish it. On both sides, then, these texts must be struck out of the question.

'The fourth source of direct proof in favour of the Presbyterian plan of Church government,' you tell us, 'is found in the model of the *Jewish Synagogue*, and in the abundant evidence which the Scriptures afford, that the Christian Church was formed after the same model.'

This is a point which will require much discussion. It will, therefore, be more convenient to make it one of the topics of the next letter.

LETTER XII.

REV. SIR:

THE question now before us, is, was the Christian Church formed upon the model of the *Jewish Synagogue?* I answer, in my opinion, it was not; but if it was, in some immaterial respects, it certainly was not in any thing essential.

1. The Jewish Synagogue had its αρχισυναγωγοι, or Rulers;[a] with the Minister, Angel, or Bishop, who led the public devotions; but their authority was confined to a single congregation. This was not the case in the Christian Church. It has been proved by abundant, and uncontrollable evidence, that the authority of the Christian Bishop, with his bench of Elders, extended over numerous congregations; so that, in this respect, which is a very material one, there is an important point of disparity. Will you, Sir, be governed by *fact*, or by *fanciful* resemblance?

2. The minister of the synagogue was not the standing Moderator of the Presbytery, as, by your own acknowledgment, the Christian Bishop was. This is another point of difference.

3. The Jewish Synagogue had no mystical and significant symbols; but the Christian Church has. Baptism and the LORD'S Supper are important mystical rites of the latter, to which the Jewish Synagogue was totally a stranger. Baptism is administered for the remission of sins, and is the rite of admis-

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a Mark v. 22. Acts xiii. 15.

sion into the Christian Church. But there was no such rite of admission into the Jewish Synagogue. The holy Eucharist exhibits CHRIST's body broken, and his blood shed upon the cross; and whoever eats the mystical, sacramental bread, and drinks of the mystical, sacramental cup, with faith and penitence, partakes of the benefits of CHRIST's death and passion. These two rites set the Christian Church at a great distance, and give it a very different character, from the Jewish Synagogue.

4. The *latter* was principally a school of morality; but the *former* is both a school of morality and religion; for there never was any religious institution without mystical, symbolical rites. From the first promise of a Redeemer, which was the foundation of the Christian Church, to its completion by CHRIST, after his resurrection, GOD's mercy to fallen man was signified by mystical rites, and man's obedience put to the trial, by demanding from him an observance of these rites. And wherever those rites are wanting, the religion of a fallen creature is wanting. This was strikingly the case in the Jewish Synagogue. Its worship, therefore, was materially different from that of the Christian Church.

5. The Jewish Synagogue was not only thus materially different, but still further, it was no Church at all. The Greek word Εκκλησια, from εκκαλεω, to *call out*, signifies a society *called*, or *chosen out of* the world. Till it is so called out of the world, or from the mass of mankind, it can have no being; "but it cannot call itself, any more than a man can bring himself into the world. Our Christian calling is as truly the work of GOD, and as much independent of ourselves, as our natural birth."[b] The Church is not a mere voluntary association, as the Jewish Synagogue was; an association that might be shaped into any form which men please to give it, and which might be abolished and revived according to men's humour; but it is a society formed by GOD, and into which fallen, sinful men are introduced by his ministers, with some mystical rite, expressive of GOD's good will towards them; a society, in which the forgiveness of sins is promised and granted by GOD, and upon which the HOLY GHOST sheds his influences to qualify its members for eternal happiness. These characters are essential to a divinely instituted Church; but the Jewish Synagogue was totally destitute of them. It, therefore, was no Church.

What further proves this point, if it need any further proof, is, that the Jewish Church was composed of all circumcised Jews, united together by the *Temple* service and priesthood. Into this society all the males were introduced by the mystical rite of circumcision, and they could not with impunity decline this association. Not so in the Jewish Synagogue. No man was under an obligation to be a member of *that*; he might, or might not, just as he pleased; for it was a mere human institution. It

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b Rev. WILLIAM JONES' *Essay on the Church*, p. 26.

was enough for him, if he attended the temple service, and complied with its rites and ceremonies: to this he was obligated, and no human power could absolve him from it. To him the temple was the centre of religious unity, and not the synagogue. The synagogue, therefore, was no part of the Jewish Church.

6. As the temple service and priesthood were the centre of unity to the Jews, so in the Christian Church, the public worship, and sacraments, and ministry, (whether the ministry be, strictly speaking, a priesthood or not,) is the centre of religious unity; and no one, upon Christian principles, can be deemed a member of CHRIST's visible, mystical body, who has not been baptized, and thereby received into the Christian Church. Of these, the Jewish Synagogue was totally destitute; and was never considered, either by Jews or Christians, as a centre of unity. The Christian Church then being so essentially different, could not have been formed upon the plan of the *Jewish Synagogue*.

By attending to these important considerations, we shall be able with ease to determine the correctness of your reasoning upon this point.

You observe, first, 'the temple service was throughout, typical, and ceremonial, and of course, was done away by the coming of CHRIST.' This, Sir, is by no means correct. In the temple service, there were prayers, and praises, and blessings; so there were in the Jewish Synagogue, and so there are in the Christian Church. In every religious institution, there must necessarily be some points of coincidence; but to argue from this, that any particular institution was copied from another, when the resemblance arises from the very nature of the case, is extremely weak. At this rate, I can prove that the temple service was taken from the worship of the Egyptian Isis and Osiris, and that of the Christian Church, from the worship in the temples of the Persian Magi. Where GOD is worshipped with any tolerable rationality, there must necessarily be a mixture of *moral* acts with *ceremonial* observances. The few points of coincidence, therefore, between the synagogue and the Christian Church, necessarily springing out of the very nature of those institutions, afford no ground whatever for asserting, that CHRIST's Church was formed after the Jewish Synagogue. Nay, had the *latter* never existed, the *former* would have been just what it is.

Another erroneous ground, which, I conceive, you have taken upon this point, is contained in the following assertion: that 'the *synagogue* worship was that part of the organized religious establishment of the Old Testament Church, which, like the decalogue, was purely moral and spiritual, or at least, chiefly so; and, therefore, in its leading characters, proper to be adopted under any dispensation.' Now, Sir, if I do not greatly deceive myself, I have shown, that the *synagogue* worship was no part at all of the Jewish *Church*, that it was destitute of some of the essential characters of a Church, and that the people were not obliged, by any divine authority, to attend its service. The *religious*,

indeed, frequented it, but not under the idea of its being the service of a Church—*that*, no Jew could possibly have entertained, without entertaining a principle that would necessarily have produced schism. Our SAVIOUR, too, and his Apostles, frequented the synagogue, as they would have done any moral and religious association; but they give us not the least hint, that they thought it a part of the Old Testament Church. Indeed, it is so evident that neither Jews nor Christians ever considered the synagogue as a part of the Church, that it is not worth while to say any thing more upon the subject. It *could not* be a Church in the proper meaning of the word, as has been already observed; for a Church is a *divine* institution; but the *synagogue* was altogether *human*, and, therefore, essentially different.

This I take to be the root of the error into which, I conceive, so many have run upon this subject. Once settle the true notion of a Church, and all that you have said to prove your point falls, of course, to the ground.

Another argument that you use to prove conformity between the synagogue and the Christian Church, is, that the words *synagogue* and *church* have the same signification. This, from a scholar, is astonishing. How easy and evident is the distinction! They both imply *an assembly*, and so far, therefore, they agree. In this sense, the word *synagogue* may always be changed for the word *church*; but here we must stop—we can go no farther. I have shown that a church is an assembly of a particular nature, marked with particular characters, divinely instituted in its ministry, in its sacraments, in its principle of unity; and, therefore, at a great distance from a mere synagogue or assembly of people met together even for religious purposes. The community of signification, then, between a 'synagogue,' or 'assembly,' and a 'church,' so far as they mean a *collection* of people, is one of the greatest fallacies that I have ever seen. It is that which logicians call an imperfect enumeration, or a false induction; when, from one or two points of coincidence, a general proposition is inferred.

You appear to me, Sir, to be sensible that this mode of reasoning will not be deemed of much weight, for you say, 'I am aware that this coincidence in the meaning of these words is not absolutely conclusive.' These are soft words. It should be said—this is a perfect *sophism*; and, therefore, deserves contempt.

Your next argument in favour of your hypothesis, is, that 'the mode of worship adopted in the Christian Church by the Apostles, was substantially the same with that which had long been practised in the synagogue.'

To this I have already given a reply, viz. that wherever there is any rational worship, there must necessarily be some points of coincidence. In the Jewish *temple* there were prayers and praises—in the *synagogue* that was also the case; and in the Christian *Church*, we worship GOD in the same manner. This

arises from the very nature of religion. Accordingly, we find these things in every modification of *gentilism*. What is the inference? Is it, that all modes of worship were taken from one particular model? Certainly not.

Your third argument in favour of your hypothesis has as little force in it as the preceding. You say, 'The titles given to the officers of the synagogue were transferred to the officers of the Christian Church;' and your presumptive inference from this is, that the one was probably copied from the other. No mode of reasoning can be more fallacious than this. The title of Bishop, which was sometimes given to the minister of the synagogue, you very well know, Sir, signifies an *overseer*, as it is rendered, *Acts* xx. 4. This very title the Athenians gave to those officers whom they sent to supervise the cities under their government: they were called Επισκοποι και φυλακες—*bishops and guardians*.[c] In the same sense, Plutarch often uses the word, as when he calls Numa the *bishop* of the vestal virgins.[d] Cicero also informs us, that Pompey made him *overseer*, or *bishop* of Campania, and the whole sea coast.[e] Now, Sir, I think I am full as much at liberty to indulge my fancy, as you are to indulge yours; and to suppose, that the Apostles in forming the ministry of the Christian Church, had an eye to the Athenian and Roman governments, and that they regulated the powers of the *Christian* Bishop by those of the *civil* Bishop. If there be any thing in sameness of title, I see not why my presumptive argument is not as good as yours. And as to the *Elders*, translated Πρεσβυτεροι by the Seventy, we read of them ages before the synagogue had an existence; and we know that they were no more than *civil* rulers among the Jews. The framers of the synagogue service and ministry adopted this title for their rulers. You might, therefore, with as much propriety, infer from this circumstance, that the synagogue was formed upon the model of the *Sanhedrim*, as that the Christian Church was formed upon the plan of the synagogue. The title too of Deacon, which is very indefinite, and generally signifies an inferior minister, we find in the Christian Church, the Jewish synagogue, and the Heathen temples. And yet these slight coincidences afford you ground to presume, that the Church of CHRIST was formed upon the plan of the synagogue; and that too when the former is essentially different from the latter, and also in opposition to complete evidence that episcopacy was not congregational, but diocesan.

Your fourth presumptive proof is, that, 'Not only the titles of officers, but also their characters, duties, and powers, in substance, were transferred from the synagogue to the Christian Church. The Bishop or Pastor who presided in each synagogue, directed the reading of the law; expounded it when read; offered up public prayers; and, in short, took the lead in conducting the public service of the synagogue. This description

c SUIDAS in Episcopo. d *In Numa*. e *Ad Atticum*, l. 7.

applies with remarkable exactness to the duties and powers of the Christian Bishop.'

To this, much reply is not necessary. It has been fully proved, that the characters of the Jewish and of the Christian Bishop were essentially different. The Jewish was not the minister of GOD to the people, but the minister of the people to GOD. The Christian Bishop is the minister of CHRIST, his Ambassador to the people, the Steward of his household, holding a commission from him to minister in holy things, and to *beseech men in* CHRIST'S *stead to be reconciled to* GOD. This is an important distinction, which makes the characters of these two officers essentially different. The one holds a *divine* commission; the other a *human:* the *one* carries from GOD a message of life, and peace, and everlasting salvation; the *other* was merely the mouth of the people, and their instructer in the law of Moses;—and in that respect was called the *angel*, or *messenger* of the people to speak to GOD in prayer for them, but not the angel of GOD with a message of peace to the people;—the *one* administers the seals of the covenant of grace, and preaches authoritatively;—the *other* had no seals entrusted to him; nor did he preach by divine authority. So grossly, Sir, do you err, when you assert, that the Jewish and Christian Bishop were of the same character.

And as the characters of these two officers were materially different; so also, of necessity, were their duties and powers. This has been sufficiently evinced by the foregoing observations.

Further: The Elders also of the Jewish synagogue, were essentially different from the Elders of the Christian Church. The *latter* have a divine commission for preaching the word, and administering the sacraments; the *former* confined themselves entirely to the temporalities of the synagogue. They rather correspond with the *lay-Elders* of your Church, and like them derived their authority from the congregation. These, in the New Testament, are called the *Rulers of the synagogue*, and are of a totally different character from the Presbyters, or Elders of the Christian Church., So also the inferior ministers of the synagogue, who were called *chazanim*, that is, *overseers*, and whom we call Deacons, differed materially from the Deacons of our Church, and in several respects from the Deacons in yours. "They had," says Prideaux,[f] "the charge and oversight of all things in the synagogue; they kept the sacred books of the Law and the Prophets, and other holy Scriptures, as also the books of their public liturgies,[g] and all utensils belonging to the synagogue. And particularly, they stood by and overlooked them that read the lessons out of the Law and the Prophets,

f Connections, Vol. II. p. 554.

g That a form of prayer was used in the Synagogue no one denies. But Dr. M. took care not to include *that* in his points of conformity.

and corrected them when they read amiss, and took the book when they had done." In this inferior ministry also there was some difference, as well as some resemblance, in the temple of the Jews, in the temples of the Heathen, and in the Christian Church; but in the latter, the difference was very wide. The Deacons in the primitive Church preached by the Bishop's authority, and assisted in distributing the elements in the Holy Eucharist. The *chazanim*, or *overseers* of the synagogue did no such thing.

There cannot possibly be any thing more weak and fallacious, than arguing from names to things. To give an instance or two. It is well known that the Egyptians made out of the *papyrus*, which was a sort of bulrush growing in the marshes about the Nile, a substance upon which they wrote; thence called *paper:* therefore, according to your presumptive mode of reasoning, our paper and their papyrus are the same thing. Again: In times more ancient than the use of papyrus, the way of writing was upon the inner bark of a tree, called in Latin *liber;* hence a book was called *liber*, and continued to be so called after the papyrus was discovered, and bark entirely laid aside; therefore, Latin *books* written upon the papyrus and upon the *bark of a tree*, were precisely the same thing. These instances may be multiplied to almost any number, and they clearly show the weakness of such a mode of reasoning.

I have now proved, I think, with great force of evidence, that the characters, the powers and the authority of the Jewish and Christian Bishops and Presbyters, were essentially different;—that the one are the ministers of a Church divinely instituted;—that the synagogue was no Church, but a mere human institution; and, therefore, its ministers were of human appointment;—that they were the ministers of the people to God, but not the ministers of God to the people; and that, consequently, the Christian Church could not possibly have been formed upon the model of the Jewish synagogue.

Nor does the imposition of hands, in the ordination of the synagogue officers, and of those of the Church, give them the least degree of similarity of character. The priesthood, by descent, was necessarily altered, as the Church was to be spread over the whole world, and no longer to be confined to a particular nation. Some rite was necessary when men were invested with the ministerial character; and none is more decent than that of imposing hands, to which the Jews had been long used on various occasions. The elders of the Sanhedrim, who were civil officers, were ordained by that rite; and priestly and parental blessings were pronounced with the same ceremony. The sameness of the rite, therefore, proves nothing. It does not so much as determine what the designation is; whether to a civil or religious office; whether it accompanies a blessing, or communicates authority.

If I can trust my own judgment, I have now fully refuted your fourth presumptive argument.

I shall, in the next place, consider your second and third presumptive arguments in favour of presbyterian parity.

Your second is founded upon the convertibility of the words Bishop and Presbyter. That Presbyters are called Bishops, I readily grant; and I also grant that this proves, that the officer who was then called a Presbyter, was the very same that was then called a Bishop; and, consequently, the office was the same. But this gives you no support whatever. It is, in truth, a perfect fallacy, as will appear from the following observations by Bishop Hoadly. "This," says he, "will not prove that these very persons were not always subject to other church officers, and at this very time to such as Timothy and Titus, as well as to the Apostles themselves; this will not prove them to be the same in their office with those who were afterwards called Bishops in an eminent sense; this will prove nothing, but that Presbyters are invested with all those powers which belonged to those who were called Bishops in the New Testament. But what those powers were, cannot be concluded from hence. Indeed, if our argument stood thus; that Bishops, now peculiarly so called, inherit the office of those who were sometimes called Bishops in the New Testament; the present plea would certainly be good, that they who are now peculiarly called Presbyters, have the same office of right belonging to them, which are claimed by those peculiarly called Bishops, because they are the officers called Bishops in the New Testament. But when our assertion is, that Bishops eminently so called answer *not* to those who are sometimes called so in the New Testament, but to those *superior* church officers, whose office we find there to have been to govern and ordain, and that Presbyters have no right originally to exercise some of those functions, which were exercised by such ecclesiastical officers as Timothy and Titus; I say, when these are our positions, it can signify nothing to allege that Presbyters are the officers who were called Bishops in the New Testament; because this will entitle them only to the office of those who are there called Bishops, not to that of those who were acknowledged to be superior to those there called Bishops. To allege this can signify nothing, unless it be included in the signification of the word Επισκοποι, (*Bishops*,) that all who were ever called so, were entitled to *ordain* and *govern*, as well as to *teach* their flocks. But that this is included in the word, was never so much as pretended. It being, therefore, a sufficient ground of the Presbyters being called Bishops, that they are, in a very proper sense, *overseers*, and have the *care* of souls entrusted to them, which is all that is implied; it doth not follow from their being called so, that they had other powers which are not necessarily included in that word. If they have powers sufficient to make that name proper to their office, this, I say, was a sufficient ground why that name was given them, before there was any design of fixing peculiar names to all the ecclesiastical officers. But they have powers which are a sufficient ground for that name, without

supposing them empowered to ordain others: Therefore it cannot follow from their being called Bishops in the New Testament, that they are entrusted with the right of ordination: or that they are called to all the offices claimed by Bishops eminently so styled in modern times."[h]

This, Sir, is strong and conclusive reasoning. It shows that the community of names proves nothing. If you would state the case fairly, it would require but little intellect to perceive the fallacy of this mode of reasoning. I will give to your argument the form of a syllogism, and then the weakness of it will strike every reader.

Officers who are invested with the same character and powers must hold the same office.

But Presbyters and Bishops are invested with the same character and powers:

Therefore, there are no higher officers in the Church than those named Bishops and Presbyters in the New Testament.

Now, Sir, is it not evident, that the conclusion has nothing to do with the premises? The conclusion still remains to be proved; and the community of names does not put you one step nearer to your point. It does not prove that the Apostles were not superior to those Bishops or Presbyters: It does not prove that Timothy and Titus were not superior to those Bishops and Presbyters: It does not prove that those Bishops or Presbyters had the power of ordaining committed to them: It does not prove that those officers who succeeded Timothy and Titus, and to whom the title of Bishop was appropriated about the beginning of the second century, did not hold a superiority over Presbyters. What, then, does it prove? Just nothing at all to your purpose.

It has always astonished me, to find men of sense and learning bringing forward this community of names to prove a parity in the ministry, when it proves only that the second order had a double title. You must prove, Sir, by other arguments, that, in the apostolic age, there was but one order of ministers in the Church, and that the power of ordination was committed by the Apostles to those called Bishops and Presbyters. If Bishops, peculiarly so called, succeeded to those called Bishops or Presbyters in the New Testament, then your argument would be good. But we say, and think we can easily prove, that they succeeded to such officers as Timothy and Titus, to whom the power of ordination was committed, and who were, in consequence, invested with a superior character to that of these Presbyters and Bishops. For any person to attempt to prove, from the double title given to those officers, over whom Timothy and Titus presided, that they and their governors were all upon a foot of parity, is perfectly ridiculous. And equally ridiculous it is to infer, that, because the successors to the authority which

h. *Reasonableness of Conformity*, p. 103, 104.

Timothy and Titus exercised over the Presbyters, had one of their titles, by ecclesiastical usage, appropriated to them, therefore, they are not of apostolic institution. Really, Sir, whatever you may think of the matter, or however you may complain of it, it is a mode of reasoning unworthy of scholars, and deserving all the contempt with which it can possibly be treated.

But, still persisting in this illogical mode of reasoning, you ask,[1] 'Have those who reject all reasoning, drawn from the application of Scriptural *names*, considered whither this principle will lead them? Have they reflected how large a portion of those weapons with which they defend the divine character and the vicarious sacrifice of the blessed Redeemer, against the attacks of Socinians, and other heretics, are necessarily surrendered, if the *names* and *titles* of Scripture are so vague and indecisive as they would, in this case, represent them? Will they venture to charge the great Head of the Church, who dictated the Scriptures, with addressing his people in a language altogether indistinct, and calculated to mislead them, and that too on a subject which, they tell us, lies at the foundation, not merely of the *welfare*, but of the very *existence* of the Church? Surely, these consequences cannot have been considered! The argument, then, drawn from the indiscriminate application of the *names Bishop* and *Presbyter* to the same persons, is conclusive. It was pronounced to be so by the venerable and learned Jerome, more than one thousand four hundred years ago; and his judgment has been adopted and supported by some of the greatest and best divines that have adorned the Christian Church, from that period down to the present day.'

Now, Sir, I do assure you, that I have fully considered, whither rejecting all reasoning from Scriptural names will lead us. But before I discuss this point, I must object to your mode of stating it. We do not reject *all* reasoning from Scripture names. We give them all the weight they will bear, but no more. We extend them as far as they ought to be extended, but no farther. Thus with respect to the name *Bishop*, or *Overseer*. It was very properly applied to Presbyters; for they are the *Overseers of the flock*; and St. Paul gives it that extension, but no more. The word does not necessarily imply, that those Presbyters had not *their* Overseers also by the Apostles' appointment—that Timothy and Titus were not *Bishops of Bishops—Overseers of Overseers*. This is precisely the distinction which the Apostle himself makes. Timothy and Titus were, beyond all reasonable controversy, sent to Ephesus and Crete to govern those very Presbyters to whom he gives the name of *Overseers*. Timothy and Titus governed both *clergy* and *people*—the Presbyters, the *people* only. Thus we evidently give to the name *Bishop* all the weight it will bear—all the extension that the office obliges us to give it. The Presbyters of

[1] Page 40.

Ephesus, from their being called *Overseers* must have had something *to oversee:* That is all the name necessarily implies. But what is that *something?* The Apostle tells us—*the flock.* Farther than this we cannot extend the name. But *you* do, and, therefore, *assume.* You rest your conclusion upon false grounds. You, in effect, say, Presbyters are styled Bishops; therefore, there can be no superior officer in the Church of CHRIST: or, the Presbyters of Ephesus are called overseers, therefore, they had no officer *to oversee them.* This is mere fallacy and gross misstatement, and can give nothing but a false view of the subject.

Our readers will now see, that you are by no means correct when you say, that we reject *all* reasoning from names. When a name clearly indicates the nature of an office, and *so far* as it indicates it, we consider it as good evidence, but we reject with great propriety any thing beyond this. Names are not always to be depended upon; because in few cases are they determinate. Thus, in the two important points of doctrine, about which you express so much fear, if we give up the argument from names. No man believes the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the atonement, more firmly than I do; but I should be very sorry that we had no other proof than names afford for those important doctrines. The proof of the Trinity we do not rest principally upon *names,* but upon *characters* and *attributes.* CHRIST is called GOD; but magistrates also are called gods; nothing clear and decisive, therefore, can be inferred from this title. Accordingly, the Arians and Socinians freely give it to CHRIST. But, when the Scripture says, this GOD created all things, we then have a right to ascribe to him the attribute of omnipotence, and that is an attribute of DEITY. Or, when omnipresence and omniscience are ascribed to CHRIST, then it follows that CHRIST is GOD in the strict and proper sense. But, on the other hand, when CHRIST is styled JEHOVAH *our righteousness;* the word JEHOVAH fixes the character of CHRIST in the most precise and determinate manner, as the word implies *self-existence;* and, consequently, CHRIST must be GOD in a strict and proper sense. Similar observations may be made with respect to the atonement. CHRIST is called our *Saviour,* our *Intercessor,* our *Propitiation;* but these names do not necessarily establish the notion of an *atonement.* But when it is said, that CHRIST *shed his blood to reconcile us to* GOD—that *we are redeemed by his blood* shed for us on the cross—that *by his stripes we are healed;* and when many other expressions are used which imply that CHRIST offered to GOD such a satisfaction, that *he could be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in his Son,* we can then ascertain the precise meaning of the several titles given to CHRIST. If these observations be correct, we need not be apprehensive about the important doctrines of the Trinity and atonement, when we reject the argument drawn from names, when those names do not determine the office or character of the person to whom they are given.

But, Sir, after all, this argument from names in the present case, is a complete fallacy, and a gross misstatement of the point in dispute. The question is not, as I have already observed, whether a Presbyter is called a Bishop; that we acknowledge; but whether that officer, with a double title, was equal in point of dignity and jurisdiction, in point of office, character, and powers, with Timothy and Titus, and Barnabas, and St. Paul, and the twelve. It is obvious to common sense, that this question can never be determined by saying, that Presbyters are called Bishops. If you would prove the parity of Presbyters with the above-named rulers of the Christian Church, you must prove that they had equal authority, equal powers, and, consequently, equal rank. This requires the evidence of fact; and, therefore, talk as much as you please about Presbyters being called Bishops, you will say nothing to the point in dispute. We have no dispute with you upon that particular; but we say it is arrant sophistry, and totally unworthy of men of sense and learning, to infer that there was no officer in the Church superior to those Presbyters or Bishops. Suppose Presbyters had continued to be called Bishops down to the present day, and that those for ages called Bishops, had continued to be called Apostles, what would you infer then from this double title? That Presbyters were equal to Apostles? Hardly. The fallacy would be too palpable. But it is as real in the present case, though not *seemingly* so. The taking the title of Bishop, which belonged to the second order, and dropping that of Apostle, which belonged to the first, makes no kind of alteration in the nature and powers of the office. The successors of the Apostles, under the title of Bishops, are precisely the same that they would have been under the title of Apostles; and yet this trivial circumstance has ever put it in the power of our opponents to raise a mist about as plain a case as can possibly be conceived. But let our readers keep their attention fixed upon nothing but facts—upon things instead of words, and then the mist vanishes immediately.

You inform us, Sir, that 'the venerable and learned Jerome, more than fourteen hundred years ago,' pronounced that the argument from the community of names, is valid; and that 'some of the greatest and best divines that have adorned the Christian Church, from that period down to the present day, have been of the same opinion.'

Here, again, the same fallacy insinuates itself. What does Jerome acknowledge? Simply this: That Presbyters were also called Bishops. But does he infer from that circumstance, that there was no officer in the Church superior to those Presbyters, or Bishops? Very far from it. He knew the fact to be otherwise, if we may believe himself; for he asserts in the most unequivocal manner, that Timothy was, in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, Bishop of Ephesus, Titus of Crete, Epaphroditus of Philippi, Polycarp of Smyrna, &c. And he asserts, that to Bishops, as succeeding to the apostolical pre-eminence, belongs the right of confirming and ordaining, and that Presbyters hold

the second place in the Church by apostolical institution. All this has been fully proved in my first letter. Now, it is impossible that Jerome, without flatly contradicting himself, can maintain what you ascribe to him. No, Sir; all that he asserts, is a community of names, and from that circumstance he infers, very illogically, indeed, that Bishops, in the ecclesiastical sense, were not placed over the Churches till after the schism at Corinth; but, that after that event, they were established by apostolical authority. This is Jerome's doctrine, as clearly as that the sun shines in the firmament. Nor is there one of the fathers who inferred a parity of ministers from the community of names; but all acknowledge, that the order, by the Church called Bishops, is of apostolic and divine institution.

I have now, I think, said sufficient to show that your second, third, and fourth presumptive arguments, have nothing solid in them. They may be a proof of the ingenuity of the *first inventors*, and may be pretty well calculated to mislead the unwary; but they never can make the least impression upon those who understand this subject.

I shall now, Sir, before I examine your *first*—but, in the order in which I have exhibited the evidence for episcopacy, the *fourth*—presumptive argument, give a view of the support we derive from the state of the Church of Jerusalem.

I do not find that you have taken any notice of the Church of Jerusalem. You certainly ought, for you very well know, that Episcopalians always bring it forward as a proof of *diocesan* episcopacy. The first Christian Church that ever was formed, deserves particular attention, as we may very reasonably suppose that all other Churches were formed upon that model. I think, upon examination, we shall find this Church affording strong support to our cause.

From the holy Scriptures we learn, that there were myriads of Christians at Jerusalem; and, consequently, numerous congregations. That St. James presided over these congregations, and over the Presbyters who officiated in them, is evident from the Acts of the Apostles. The part which he acted, cannot be accounted for on any other supposition, than that he really was what the concurring testimony of all antiquity represents him, the fixed Bishop of the particular Church of Jerusalem. When Peter was miraculously delivered from prison (*Acts* xii.) he said, *Go show these things* to *James, and to the brethren.* But why to *James* in particular? Or, why were the brethren with James rather than with *John*, who had not *then*, nor for at least *four years afterwards*, left Jerusalem?[k] When Paul and his company went up from Cæsarea, (*Acts* xxi.)—*the brethren received them gladly; and the day following they went in unto James; and all the Elders were present.* What induced them to go in unto *James* in particular; and how came all the

k See this proved by Dr. CAVE, in his Life of St. John.

Elders to be with James? In the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul says, that when—*Peter came to Antioch, he withstood him to the face, because that before certain came from James, he* (Peter) *did eat with the Gentiles*, &c. What induced St. Paul to say, that those who came from Judea, came *from James*, rather than from the other Apostles and Elders, of whom many were then residing at Jerusalem? If St. James was the proper Bishop of Jerusalem, all these facts, which upon any other supposition must appear very strange, were perfectly natural; for, to what individual of the Church should St. Peter have sent so early an account of his deliverance from prison, as to the Bishop? To whom was it so expedient, that St. Paul should give an account of the *things which* GOD *had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry*, as to the Bishop and Presbyters of the Church of the *Hebrews?* And could any thing be more natural than to say, that certain brethren, who came to Antioch from the Church of Judea, came from the *governor* of that Church?[l]

So evident it is, that James was Bishop of Jerusalem, that even Calvin thinks it highly probable, that he was governor of that Church. "When," says he, "the question is concerning dignity, it is wonderful that James should be preferred before Peter. Perhaps it was, because he was *Prefect* of the Church of Jerusalem."[m] Calvin did not choose to speak plainer; for that would have been in direct contravention to his ecclesiastical regimen.

I have but one or two things more to observe with respect to the episcopal authority of St. James. After the council holden at Jerusalem, we find him always in his diocese. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, observes, that some Jews came from him to Antioch. Upon which St. Augustine observes, "they came from Judea; for James governed the Church of Jerusalem."[n]

Several years after this, St. Paul returned to Jerusalem, and there he found St. James, and the Presbyters with him. (*Acts* xviii.) "James," as Chrysostom informs us, "was that great and admirable man, who was brother to our LORD, and Bishop of Jerusalem."[o]

During the whole of St. James' government of the Church of Jerusalem, we have not the least hint that he was ever absent from his charge, if that be of any consequence. So constant was his residence, that even the Jewish Rabbies were acquainted with his miracles, and have preserved the remembrance of them.[p] Josephus also speaks of him as sustaining a high character.[q]

Another circumstance which proves our point, is the succes-

l See the *Anti-Jacobin Review* of Campbell's Lectures, Vol. IX. p. 116, 117.

m *In Galat.* c. ii. v. 9.

n Ab Jacobo, id est a Judea; nam ecclesiæ Hierosolymetanæ Jacobus præfuit. *Opp.* Vol. IV. p. 379.

o Vol. IV. p. 864.

p CASTELLI *Lexicon*, col. 2869.

q *Antiq.* l. xx. c. 8, et apud ORIGEN *Comm. in Matt.* p. 223. See also BURSCOUGH, p. 73, 74.

sion of Simeon to James, according to the unanimous report of the ancients. Burscough says, "the remembrance of it was preserved by the Ethiopians in their *Dyptichs*;[r] by the Coptites in their *Fasti*;[s] and by the Syrians in their *Menology*."[t] St. James is expressly said by Hegesippus, who wrote in the second century, to have been appointed Bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles.[u] Ignatius, who was Bishop of Antioch a very short time after the death of St. James, affirms that St. Stephen was Deacon to St. James.[v] Clement of Alexandria, who flourished at the close of the second century, is quoted by Eusebius as saying, that immediately "after the assumption of CHRIST, Peter, James, and John did not contend for the honour of presiding over the Church of Jerusalem, but, with the rest of the Apostles, chose James the Just to be Bishop of that Church."[w] It was also received as an undoubted fact by Hippolytus—by Cyril of Jerusalem, and another Cyril of Scythopolis—by Epiphanius and Chrysostom—by Augustine and Fulgentius—by Nicephorus and Photius—by Oecumenius and Nilus. And it was also mentioned as a matter universally acknowledged by the sixth general council;[x] and Blondel himself confesses, that it was asserted by all the fathers.[y]

It does not appear to me possible, to produce any matter of fact that is supported by clearer and stronger evidence than this. Is there stronger evidence that Romulus was the founder of Rome, that Numa was the second king of the Romans, that Junius Brutus and Tarquinius Collatinus were the first consuls? There certainly is not. The testimonies to these facts, do not stand so near the events as the testimonies to the point in question; nor were these facts more universally believed by the Romans in all subsequent ages, than that St. James was Bishop of Jerusalem was believed by Christians in all subsequent ages. There is not the least contradiction, not one dissenting voice. Even Jerome, whom you acknowledge to be a man of great learning and research, bears his testimony to this fact. He affirms,[z] that, "immediately after the passion of our Lord, James was constituted Bishop of Jerusalem"—Bishop in the ecclesiastical use of the word; the *overseer* of numerous congregations, and numerous clergy; just such a Bishop as had the supreme power of the keys, of confirmation, and of ordination. Is it not, Sir, a most extraordinary instance of the perverseness of the human mind, that the advocates of parity should be so tenacious of Jerome when he speaks obscurely, and totally regardless of him when he speaks in plain and unequivocal terms; that they should admire him for the correctness of his *opinion*, when they have the *making* of that opinion; but reject him for his *testi-*

r LUDOLF. *Com. ad Hist. Ethiop.* p. 342.
t COMBEFIS *Not. in Auct. Bibl. Patr.* l. 2.
v *Ep. ad Trall.*
x BURSCOUGH'S *Church Government*, p. 65.
z *In. Galat.* i. 19.
s Ab eodem LUDOLF. l. 3. p. 66.
u Apud EUSEB. l. 2. c. 23.
w Apud EUSEB. l. 2. c. 1.
y *Apol.* p. 50.

mony, because that is inflexible? Yes, Sir, it is a sad instance. But who can say that he is totally free from this weakness?

There cannot, Sir, be a more rational way of ascertaining the meaning of Scripture passages which relate to a fact, than to appeal to the testimony of the ancients. To that testimony I have appealed, and it appears beyond contradiction, that the result is in perfect unison with the interpretation Episcopalians give to the texts relating to St. James. If you had the testimony of antiquity coinciding with your sense of those texts, I should immediately concede that we are wrong in our interpretation of them. If this be not the fairest and best way of proceeding, I know not what is. This is precisely the way that I would take, were I disputing with a person who denied the obligation of Christians to observe the first day of the week. I would acknowledge at once, that there is not in Scripture any express precept, nor any clear warrant. I would mention to him the texts which seem to look that way, and I would prove to him, by the testimony of the primitive Church, that the sense given to those texts by those who observe the first day of the week, is perfectly correct. And if this would not satisfy him, he must remain in his unbelief.

It is scarcely possible, Sir, to produce texts of Scripture for any point whatever, that may not be obscured by plausible objections. Ingenuity is never at a loss; and when it is excited to exertion by prejudice, and by an attachment to a particular hypothesis, it is extremely difficult to diminish its vigour, and to divest it of all its subterfuges. You know, Sir, that this is strikingly the case with Deism in its attacks upon Revelation, and with Arianism and Socinianism, in their attacks upon the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement. What now is to be done? Nothing that I know of, but to prove Revelation to be a fact, in the same manner that you would prove any other matter of fact. Prove in the same manner that it is a fact, that the primitive Church believed the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, and then the fair inference is, that the interpretation we give to the texts relating to these important doctrines, is correct and proper. A better criterion than this, human ingenuity cannot devise.

This is the method I have taken in this and other Scripture cases. I have placed no dependence, in relation to the present point, upon any criticism on the Greek word ΚΡΙΝΩ. I know that it has various significations; and I can see nothing in the circumstances related of the council of Jerusalem, that obliges us to give it a sense favorable to episcopacy. I can see nothing in that transaction that *proves* St. James to be President of that council; nor have I met with any thing in the ancients that I have consulted, that clearly goes to that point, except one testimony from Chrysostom. But I see enough to convince me, that he was at the head of all the Presbyters and congregations in Jerusalem. For I find him constantly distinguished from his

clergy. He is always mentioned first, and the name of no other Presbyter, however eminent he may have been, is ever given. He is mentioned with marked respect on various occasions. All reports and applications are made to him seated among his Elders, and not to the other Apostles at Jerusalem; and his relation to the Elders and to the whole Church was, most clearly, fixed and permanent. And to be perfectly certain, that I do not view these circumstances through the medium of prejudice, I have consulted the primitive writers, so far as I have access to them, and I find that they are unanimous in asserting, that St. James was Bishop of Jerusalem, and that there was a clear and indisputable succession to that see for ages. If, Sir, you reject this evidence, I am well satisfied that you must, in order to be consistent, give up several points, of which you appear to me to have no doubt whatever.

Let us now, Sir, take another position, and view this matter through a Presbyterian glass; and then we shall see St. James seated among his Elders as their *Moderator;* not a temporary one to be sure, but fixed in the chair during his life. Let us also view Timothy, and Titus, and the *seven Angels* as *Moderators* also, possessing no power but that of collecting the votes and keeping order. Well: James the Moderator of Jerusalem, who is so particularly distinguished in the Scripture, and who drew upon himself the vengeance of the Jews, by filling the high station of a *chairman* to the Presbytery, was succeeded in his Moderatorship by Simeon, who lived till the year 110. Timothy, the Moderator of Ephesus, and Titus, the Moderator of Crete, to whom were committed the power of ordaining Elders, and of censuring those Elders, together with the Deacons and Laity of their Churches, and, in short, of regulating all ecclesiastical matters, had also their successors to the same Moderatorship. The Angels of the seven Churches of Asia Minor, who are either censured, or praised, for all the corruption, or all the purity in their respective Churches, were no more than Moderators, and in this character had likewise their successors. Now, Sir, not to dwell on the utter inconsistency of this notion of a Moderator, with the scriptural account of these persons, how came the ancients to be so grossly mistaken with respect to their character? How came Ignatius, who was contemporary with the greater part of these Moderators, and with all their immediate successors, and who was himself the Moderator of the Church of Antioch, to be so grossly ignorant of the nature of his own, and of their official character? How came he, wise, virtuous, and pious as he was, with a horrible death staring him in the face, to tell us that this Moderator, whom he calls *Bishop*, was, under CHRIST, the visible source of spiritual authority in the Church? That without authority from this Moderator, no Presbyter could baptize, and administer the holy Eucharist? How came he to enjoin upon Presbyters, Deacons, and Laymen, submission to this Moderator? How came the fathers after him

to speak the same language, and to brand as heretics two or three who maintained the contrary opinion? Really, Sir, it appears to me a most arduous task, to reconcile the universal sense of the Church, with the construction you give to the passages adduced by Episcopalians in favor of their regimen. Those who lived at, or near the times of those *Moderators*, were totally mistaken with respect to the powers they exercised; but those who lived seventeen hundred years after them, know with the utmost certainty, that a Bishop, in the apostolic age, was no more than a presbyterian Moderator.

——Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas. u.

But I cannot think that those who adopt fanciful interpretations, and grossly violate the truth of facts, are entitled to much indulgence.

In my next, I shall consider the argument founded on the commission given by CHRIST to his Apostles.

LETTER XIII.

REV. SIR:

I SHALL now proceed to consider your first argument for ministerial parity, viz. 'that CHRIST gave but one commission for the office of the gospel ministry, and that this office of course is one.'[a] Upon this argument you seem to place great reliance; and you even go so far as to brand with absurdity the contrary supposition.

After the numerous specimens which I have given of mistatements of facts—misrepresentations of passages materially affecting the present discussion—gross and palpable fallacies—unfair views of quotations from Episcopal writers—and numberless bold, unfounded assertions; after, I say, such an ample specimen of these things, I must declare, that I am not at all surprised at what you have asserted, with respect to the commission given by CHRIST to his Apostles. Your argument is, the commission is but one; the form of investiture is but one; therefore, there is but one order of ministers. This also is a fallacy; for your conclusion, to come to the point, ought to be—therefore, the Apostles did not afterwards divide the powers of the commission. But you well know this would be false reasoning.

No author, with whom I am acquainted, has discussed this point with greater force of reason than Bishop Hoadly. He

u [Painters and poets always possessed equally the right of daring to do what they please.]

a Letter II. p. 28.

has, in my judgment, so completely demolished this plea, that I shall do little more than transcribe, in a condensed form, what he has said.[b]

Supposing, what you contend for, that the passages which you have quoted, imply the whole commission by which the Apostles were empowered to ordain others to succeed them in their ministry; it will not follow, that all whom they appointed to an ecclesiastical office, were appointed to all the offices which you suppose to be included in the words here used. The utmost of what you can contend for, is, that our Saviour commissioned his Apostles to go forth into the world, to endeavour by themselves and others whom they should appoint, to convince men that he was the Messiah; to baptise those who should believe in him; and then to teach all such persons fully the conditions of his institution. And the utmost of what can be included in this commission is this, that the Apostles were required to take care, both by themselves and others whom they were to appoint, that the will of CHRIST should be performed in these several instances. Well then; what can be collected from hence? Is it not fairly left to the Apostles (who were afterwards to be endowed with the HOLY GHOST) to call persons to which of these offices they should see fit? Would they not have completely answered their trust, had they appointed some persons to *baptize*, and not to *teach;* others to *teach*, and not to *ordain;* and others to *ordain* and *teach?* And is it not evident, that the commission of others was to be judged of by what the Apostles thought fit to intrust to them, not by what our Saviour thought fit to intrust to the Apostles? The first answer then, is this, that all the ends of the commission given to the Apostles *might* be answered by their appointing different orders for different offices in the Church; and therefore, that it does not follow, that they must have given the same powers to all whom they ordained.

Nor does it follow, that this is the commission of Presbyters in such a sense, as that they are empowered by it to ordain others, because the Apostles were. This, indeed, is the point which you, instead of proving, take for granted. You say there was but one commission, and, therefore, there was but one order of ministers. This is no consequence: it is altogether gratuitous. This may be the original commission, by which CHRIST declared to the Apostles, that it was his will, that disciples should be made, baptized, and instructed; and, consequently, that there should be officers in the Church for all these purposes; but it does not at all follow, that it was his will that every one who should be appointed to *teach*, should likewise be empowered to *appoint others* to teach; nor is it in the least implied in the words of the commission. This is the thing to be proved. If, then, it does not result from the nature of the thing, nor from the words of the commission, that the Apostles were obliged to

b Brief Defence, p. 138, 139.

give all *teachers* the power of *ordination*; then must we inquire into the future behaviour of the Apostles, to know what officers they constituted, and what powers they granted to them. Now, I think, it has been abundantly proved, that there is no reason, from any rule laid down, nor from any example mentioned in the New Testament, to think that the power of *ordination* was given to those officers called *Overseers*, or *Presbyters*; notwithstanding that they were called to *teach* Christians, and *to feed the flock of* CHRIST. It is of no importance to say, that 'every minister of the gospel, who has these powers [the powers of *baptizing* and *preaching*] is a successor of the Apostles, is authorized by this commission, and stands on a footing of official equality with those to whom it was originally delivered, so far as their office was ordinary and perpetual.'[6] I say, it is of no importance to say this, since this commission, as has been already observed, did not oblige the Apostles to grant all powers to all teachers in the Church; and since you have advanced no proof that this is the commission of Presbyters in any other sense, than as it is the original declaration of CHRIST; or as the Apostles were certainly commanded, and empowered by it to see that there should be officers for these purposes in the Church. But though the Apostles were thus empowered, it does not follow, that every officer they appointed in the Church was thus empowered.

Again: Though this commission does not expressly say, that he who is called to *teach* in the Church, shall *not* be called to *ordain* likewise, yet it does not follow, that every one who is called to *teach* is *therefore* called to *ordain*. It should be particularly remembered, that the Apostles were to be endowed with the HOLY GHOST, who was to direct them in the execution of the authority committed to them by CHRIST; and consequently, whether but one order was appointed by them for the offices designed to be continued in the Church, must be collected from their succeeding practice.

Further: It may as well be proved from hence, that all ecclesiastical teachers, had, in the first age, the powers of Apostles, as that they have since, the powers of Bishops, properly so called. For there is no difference at all made in the commission. And, therefore, if this be the commission both of the Apostles, and of the Presbyters whom they ordained, in the same sense; then had those Presbyters the same powers which the Apostles had, in their ordinary, transmissible character. If, Sir, you will assert that they had, then you flatly contradict the Scriptures, and the unanimous voice of antiquity. The Apostles, in their extraordinary powers, had no superiority over others who had those extraordinary powers. Evangelists, Presbyters, Deacons, even Laymen had those extraordinary powers. There were prophets, inspired teachers, workers of miracles, those who spoke divers tongues; and St. Luke, and St. Mark, who were not of the

[6] Letter II. p. 20.

twelve, by inspiration wrote the history of our Saviour's life and sufferings. The extraordinary powers of the Apostles, then, were not the foundation of their superiority. It must have arisen from another source, from their possessing the full powers of the commission given them by CHRIST, which Presbyters did not possess. Hence their supremacy over the Christian Church. Now, if the Presbyters did not possess the same ordinary powers with the Apostles, then the power of *ordination*, for any thing that appears to the contrary, may be excepted as well as any other power. And if the Apostles were to be guided by the HOLY GHOST in the exercise of their commission, then we must determine, from what they *actually did*, whether they assigned *distinct works* to *distinct officers*. This is the sure way of proceeding, and not that of relying upon our own conjectures and surmises. In a word; granting that the commission given to the Apostles was their sole authority for governing the Church, and perpetuating the ministry, there is no foundation for the conclusion you draw from it, nor have you advanced any thing but your own affirmation in proof of it.

Still farther: I do not see how this commission could have been that, by virtue of which Matthias acted as an Apostle. He was called to the Apostolate in a different manner from the other Apostles. To be sure, he was called to the exercise of equal powers with them; but it was not by virtue of this *commission*. In like manner, I do not see how it could have been that St. Paul acted in consequence of this commission, when he was called to the Apostolate in a wonderful manner; and some time after this commission was given to the other Apostles. And if he did not derive his authority from this commission, how could the Presbyters whom he ordained, plead this commission for their right to ordain? All the directions we have in the New Testament concerning ordination, are to be found in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus; and we may be sure he gave those directions under the guidance of the HOLY GHOST. If, then, we find from these epistles that he made a distinction of officers in the Church, it is in vain to talk about the *one commission*; and by no means like a scholar, to infer a parity of officers from the words of the commission, when those words do not necessarily imply it. The words, indeed, imply a parity of apostolical powers, and, consequently, a parity of rank among the Apostles, but nothing farther. They afford a good argument to *Protestants* against *Papists*, but not to *Presbyterians* against *Episcopalians*.

Lastly: Either the Apostles might make a distinction in ecclesiastical offices, notwithstanding this commission, or not. If they *might*, then this commission signifies nothing to prove that all who are called to *teach*, are called likewise to *ordain*; and, consequently, if this be granted to be the commission of all Presbyters, it may be a commission to them only to *teach and baptize*, and not likewise to *ordain*. If they *might not* make a distinction, then, neither was it left to them to debar the first

Presbyters from ordination, nor to appoint Timothy, and such superior officers, to that work. For, if it was our LORD's declared will, that the same persons that should be called to teach, should also be called to ordain; how could the Apostles justify their debarring those whom they called to teach, from ordaining, and appoint other officers for that purpose? Or, what reason can possibly be found out for such a procedure? But I think it has been fully proved, that they *did* debar the first Presbyters from *ordaining*. Whence it follows, that they might, notwithstanding this commission, appoint that some officers should be called to *teach* in the Church; and *others*, distinct from these, to *ordain*, as well as to *teach*.

I shall now close this part of our discussion with proposing to your consideration a few questions.

1. How came the Apostle Paul to restrain the Presbyters of Ephesus and Crete from the exercise of their *right* of *ordaining*, without any apology for so doing; without any acknowledgment that this *right* did originally belong to them; without any declaration that it was only for present expediency? Why do we find the first Presbyters dealt with by St. Paul exactly as he would have dealt with them, had they been *originally* precluded from the right of ordaining?

2. If this restraint put upon the Presbyters of Ephesus and Crete was but for a short time, (as some Presbyterians have supposed) and was designed to be taken off when the ground of the restraint was removed, how comes it that in all the accounts of the primitive Church, we read of *single persons* succeeding the Apostles, and such officers as Timothy and Titus? How comes it, that, immediately upon their death, we find the same restraint and the same distinction spoken of with so much zeal in Ignatius' epistles?

3. If this restraint upon the Presbyters was designed to be taken off after the death of the Apostles, and was accordingly removed, *how* and *when* was it imposed again upon them? Which is the intermediate time, in which they exercised this right of ordination? Which is the time when the restraint was laid upon them again? And how comes it that their ordinations were always disapproved and condemned, and their *right* to this work always denied? It will require some ingenuity to answer these questions, consistently with the voice of Scripture and antiquity.

I have now, Sir, made what appears to me to be a sufficient reply to your four grand positions, on which you seem to place great reliance; and if I have been fortunate enough to show their weakness, there is an end to the controversy. Of this, I presume not to judge for any body but myself. Let our readers impartially weigh the evidence on both sides of the question, and then let them conscientiously decide and act.

I will not, Sir, enter into any dispute with you, concerning the nature of the commission given to the seventy disciples be-

fore our SAVIOUR's crucifixion. Every thing upon that point is involved in much uncertainty; and to assert what cannot be proved, is no mark of a judicious controvertist. Granting every thing that some Episcopalians have contended for, still it remains true that the Church of CHRIST, in its explicit, permanent form, was not established till after our LORD's resurrection. I am much of the mind of Bishop Sage upon that point.

I shall now, Sir, notice a few more of your observations, and then proceed to examine what you have said in your sixth letter, with respect to the *reformers of the Church of England.*

In the first part of your second letter, you thus speak: 'In all disputes relating either to the faith or the practice of Christians, the first and the grand question is, *What saith the Scripture?* This is the ultimate and the only infallible standard. Whatever is not found in the Bible cannot be considered, in any sense, as essential either to the doctrine or the order of the Church. This maxim is especially applicable to the subject now under consideration.'

In all discussions by adverse parties, it is necessary that they should express themselves in such a manner, that there can be no room for any mistake about their meaning. This I know requires much attention to perspicuity and precision in the use of words. This perspicuity appears to me to be wanting in the above quotation. Pray, Sir, how do you mean to apply the word *essential?* Do you mean to speak of doctrines, the belief of which is *essential* to salvation? If you do, with whom are you contending? Certainly not with me, nor with any Episcopalian that I know of. It is no part of my creed, that a man cannot be saved who is not an Episcopalian. My charity is very different from that; and I am persuaded, supposing you to be a Calvinist, much more extensive than yours; notwithstanding your charge of 'bigotry' against some Episcopalians. *Bigotry* is sometimes a very convenient word in the mouths of opponents, as *Papist* is in the mouths of Protestants, and *Arminian* in the mouths of Calvinists. Once apply the epithet to which reproach is annexed by party, and the poor man is immediately run down. This may be good policy, but I doubt whether it is Christian charity.

If you mean by the word 'essential' not what is necessary to salvation, but what is necessary to a correct faith;—I pray, who is to be the judge of the correctness of Christian faith? Is it the Pope, or Luther, or Calvin, or the Reformers of the Church of England, or the General Assembly of Scotland, or the Synod of Dort, or the Westminster Divines, or any others? Pray, Sir, tell me. If you reply, What is deemed essential to a correct faith by the great body of Christians in all ages, and all countries, then you have recourse to extraneous elucidation, and give up the Bible as being perfectly clear in all points without it. If you say, that every man must determine for himself what is essential to a correct faith, then you make a correct faith what

every man chooses to fancy as such; and, of course, the standard of correctness every man's imagination. Then what is correct in one is incorrect in another. What is essential to a right faith in the judgment of one, is by no means so in the judgment of another. And thus you must either give up your assertion that the Bible alone, in all cases, without any elucidation from the faith and practice of the primitive Church, is sufficient to determine what are the essentials of a correct faith; or you must assert, that a right faith is just what every man makes it. The line of distinction which I have drawn upon this subject for my own guidance is this: What is essential to a *right faith*, and what is essential to *salvation*, are by no means equivalent. A man, whose faith is incorrect in some important points, may still be saved. It is not possible for fallible man to determine, how far a person may proceed in error, without excluding himself from salvation. That belongs to God alone. This is my first distinction; and an important one it is; because it enables me, with perfect consistency, to contend earnestly for what I deem essential to a correct faith, and at the same time extend the utmost charity to those who do not coincide in opinion with me. Thus, although I consider a belief of the doctrine of the Trinity essential to a right Christian faith, yet I dare not say, nor think, that a man cannot be saved who does not believe it. In like manner, I make a distinction between what is essential to an apostolic Church, and what is essential to salvation. I believe episcopacy essential to an apostolic Church; but I do not believe that it is essential to salvation that every man be an Episcopalian. And thus, in this case as in the former, I can contend earnestly for being a member of this episcopal, apostolical Church, in perfect consistence with a belief that numbers who are not of this Church, will be finally saved. This is my second distinction; and if I do not deceive myself, it is absolutely necessary to enable me to contend consistently with charity, for what I deem essential to a right faith and right discipline.

If these distinctions be admitted, we shall the more easily determine how far your assertion is true, that the Bible is the only infallible standard of what is essential to the doctrine, or the order of the Church.

I acquiesce in this assertion, so far as this—that when the sense of Scripture is ascertained, we are to be absolutely determined by it. Christians can make no appeal from it to any other standard.

But then the question will be, How are we to determine what the sense of Scripture is in points relating to faith, and the order of the Church? Will you answer, There are certain fixed principles of interpretation, in which men of sense and learning are generally agreed? That is undoubtedly correct; but then another question arises, Who is to apply those principles? Will you say, Undoubtedly, every man must apply them for himself? Then we shall infallibly have different results. A regard to jus-

tice is acknowledged by all men to be an indispensable duty; yet two men, who are equal lovers of justice, and equally intelligent, will not see the same action, in reference to the principle of justice, in the same point of light; nay, they will sometimes view it in directly opposite points of light. So it is with respect to the doctrines and government of the Church. *You* say, that there is enough in Scripture to determine an impartial inquirer, that the government of the Church is *presbyterian*. *We*, on the contrary, say, that there is enough in Scripture to determine an impartial inquirer, that the government of the Church is *episcopal*. *You* say, that you interpret the passages relating to this point upon sound principles of criticism. *We* say, also, that we interpret them upon sound principles of criticism. What now is to be done? Who is to decide between us? There cannot possibly be but one answer, viz. the Christians who lived near the times of the Apostles, are the best judges in this case. As the government of the Church is a matter of fact, there is no other way of deciding the dispute. To talk, therefore, of the Bible being the only standard, is a mere fallacy. Nobody doubts that; but that is not the question. The question is, What is the sense of the Bible? Determine that, and then there is no appeal. But neither Presbyterians nor Episcopalians, it seems, can determine it by an appeal to that standard.—There remains then nothing but an appeal to the primitive Church. That appeal we have made, and the decision is clearly and decisively in our favour, learned Presbyterians themselves being the judges.

All, then, that you have said about the Bible's being the only infallible guide, (in disputable matters) can have no other effect but to mislead your readers. It carries, indeed, a specious appearance, but, when sifted, it amounts to nothing at all.

This is strikingly the case with respect to matters of fact, where there is any difference of opinion. But it is not confined to matters of fact; it extends also to points of doctrine. For instance: We *Trinitarians* say, that the passages relating to the Trinity, are interpreted by us upon sound principles of criticism. The *Arians* and *Socinians* say, that is not the case; that praise belongs to them. What now is to be done? Appeal to those who were contemporary with, or very near the times of the Apostles, and you will find it to be a matter of fact, that the doctrine of the Trinity was deemed one of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith; and this shows that our interpretation of the passages relating to this point, is perfectly correct. And thus it is with respect to every doctrine of Christianity that is disputed. Only make it appear that it is a matter of fact, that it was the catholic faith in the purest ages of the Church, and the scale must be immediately turned in favour of that doctrine; for the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis, and St. Augustine, has never yet failed: "Whatever has been believed at all times, and in all places, and from the beginning, must be apostolical." We can-

not, then, even in points of faith, always decide without much *extraneous* assistance of various kinds. And if this be the case with respect to fundamental points of doctrine, it is certainly more so with respect to some important matters of fact; such as the change of the Sabbath, infant baptism, and the canon of Scripture. Dispute as much as you please upon these points, until you reduce them to matters of fact, you will never throw so much light upon them as to obviate every difficulty. Just so it is with respect to the government of the Church.

But, Sir, I need not have given myself the trouble of making these observations. You tell us, in the passage under consideration, that 'whatever is not found in the Bible, cannot be considered, in any sense, as essential either to the doctrine, or the order of the Church;' and that 'this maxim is especially applicable to the subject now under consideration.' Yet, in another place, you say, 'Whoever expects to find any formal or explicit decision on this subject, delivered by CHRIST or his Apostles, will be disappointed.' Now, what is the inevitable consequence from these two passages? I appeal to every man of common sense, whether it is not one of these two things; either that the Bible is not a sufficient standard—for what is not explicit, can certainly never be a standard; and then the appeal to the Bible is idle; or that, as there is nothing explicit in the Bible upon the subject of church government, it cannot be a matter of any material consequence; for you say, 'Whatever is not found in that book, cannot be essential to the order of the Church.' Now, what a curiosity is this! A learned divine sits down to write a volume to prove from *Scripture*, that presbyterian government is the only mode instituted by the great Head of the Church, and that episcopacy is a wicked usurpation; but in the very outset of his work, he tells his readers, that there is nothing explicit upon the subject, in the book to which he appeals; and yet, afterwards labours through one hundred and twenty-three pages to prove his point from the Bible alone. This standard then, by his own acknowledgment, is no standard; and this 'maxim so peculiarly applicable to the present subject,' turns out to be no maxim.

And all this, Sir, you assert directly in the face of your own Confession of Faith; which makes a parity of ministers of divine institution; and, consequently, it must be evidently revealed in Scripture. What, Sir, will your brethren say to you, for destroying, by a dash of your pen, all their hopes from Scripture testimony? What will Dr. Mason and Mr. M'Leod, who are such faithful coadjutors, say to you? They are labouring hard to prove presbyterian government a divine institution, upon the sole ground of Scripture; but you step forth and tell them, there is nothing explicit upon the subject in Scripture. Who are we to believe? You, or them? Where are we to look for the evidence of this fact? Not in Scripture, for there you say we have nothing explicit. Not in the fathers; for they, you tell us, are not unanimous, but contradict one another. In the name of com-

mon sense, what are we to do? What a wonderful thing is this! A mighty fabric has been erected for ages, and exposed, from the very beginning, to the view of all men, and yet no mortal can tell *who* raised it, nor *when* it was raised. And we are involved in this ignorance, as you say, from a want of explicitness in the Bible, and of consistency in the fathers; and thus we are left by Him, who is wisdom itself, to form just such a Church as whim, or prejudice, or interest, may suggest. This is strange doctrine from a Christian divine.

But, Sir, we Episcopalians are of a very different opinion. We believe, with the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, that the constitution of the Christian Church is explicitly exhibited in the sacred Scripture; and with our own Church, that "it is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time, there have been three orders of ministers in CHRIST's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."[d] To the Scriptures we have appealed, and we have found, (to mention but one instance,) Timothy exercising episcopal authority over the Presbyters, Deacons, and Laity, of the Church of Ephesus; and we have confirmed our interpretation, by the unanimous testimony of the primitive Church.

There is another passage in your Letters, which, as it has some speciousness, had better be noticed. You say, (p. 14.) 'It is certainly contrary to the genius of the Gospel dispensation, which is pre-eminently distinguished from the Mosaic economy by its simplicity and spirituality, to place forms of outward order among those things which are essential to the very existence of the Church.'

This, Sir, is a very vague and indefinite passage. Mere forms of outward order, which have no foundation in any thing but decency and propriety, we consider as very arbitrary and variable; that being deemed proper and decent in one country, which is not so deemed in another. This mutability in circumstances of this nature, is what our great episcopal writers contended for, against the Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If these be the forms you mean, you totally mistake the question. Circumstances, which, from their very nature, are mutable, we maintain are not worth contending for; and no Church treats the contrary notion with more contempt than ours. Had the Puritans entertained the same correct opinion upon this point, that the Church of England has constantly entertained from the Reformation, history would never have had her pages stained with such shameful violations of Christian unity. But, Sir, if you mean (and you must mean so, to mean any thing to the purpose,) that the ministry and the sacraments are mere forms of outward order, then I have nothing to do but to refer you to your own standard of faith. The Church to which you belong, and whose Confession of Faith I presume you subscribed, places

d Preface to Ordination Office.

this matter precisely upon the same ground that we do. No covenant title, says the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, but in the Church—no admission into the Church but by baptism—no baptism but by a lawful minister—and no lawful minister but by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery.[e] So says Dr. Mason, also. "Her" (the Church's) "ministry enters into her very being. Had the ministry ever been destroyed, the Church would have been destroyed too."[f] So says a man whom you highly reverence, John Calvin. "Neither the light nor heat of the sun, nor meat, nor drink, are so necessary to nourish and sustain the present life, as the office of the Apostles and Pastors is necessary to preserve the Church."[g] And yet, Sir, in opposition to your great exemplar, Calvin, your ingenious coadjutor, Dr. Mason, your own Confession of Faith, which, I presume, you think yourself bound to maintain, and, what is worse, to the holy Scriptures, (which I shall prove presently,) you consider the ministry a mere mutable, external thing, not at all necessary to its existence.

"Baptism," says your platform of faith,[h] "is the seal of the covenant of grace." Baptism is essential to Church-membership. So says the Confession, and so say the Scriptures. Now, baptism is an *external*. But *you* say, 'It is certainly contrary to the genius of the Gospel dispensation, to place forms of outward order among those things which are essential to the very existence of the Church.' You must excuse me, Sir. Although I do not bow to every thing I find in the Westminster Confession of Faith, yet, in this instance, I think it is perfectly correct. Upon *you*, however, that Confession has a claim of respect and submission.

The truth, Sir, is, that what you have said upon this point, is equally opposed to the declarations of our Church, of your own, and of the holy Scriptures.

You have another assertion, which is as little tenable as the foregoing. You condemn us, Sir, for laying so much stress upon episcopal order, and you very roundly tell us, that 'it is placing a point of external order on a par with the essence of religion.'

Now, Sir, that you should not know that we place it precisely upon the same ground with your own Confession of Faith, is strange indeed. Need I observe, that your Confession makes ordination by Presbyters essential to the ministry, and a ministry essential to the Church; and you yourself tell us, that the validity of our orders arises from Presbyters' joining their hands with the Bishop's. We do not thank you for the compliment, I can assure you; but that by the way. Well, Sir, whatever importance the Westminster divines attach to presbyterian ordination, we attach to episcopal, and not a tittle more. If we put our ordination upon a par with the essence of religion, so do

e Chap. 25, 27, 28.
f *Christian's Magazine*, p. 219.
g *Inst.* Lib. iv. c. 3.
h Chap. 25, 27, 28.

they put theirs. But the truth is, that neither of us puts it on that footing. The doctrine of both Churches is perfectly the same, and perfectly correct. Both make a ministry essential to a visible Church, and the visible Church, with all its ordinances, a mean, by divine institution, of promoting that purity and piety of heart, which are essential to the enjoyment of God in his heavenly kingdom. Now, Sir, can you suppose, that both your Church and ours, are so preposterous as to put the *means* upon a par with the *end*—the Church *militant* upon a par with the Church *triumphant*—the *ministry* upon a par with the *end* of the ministry—the *messenger* upon a par with the *message*—the *sacraments* upon a par with the *grace* conveyed by them? It is strange that you should suppose it; yet it seems to be the case. But, on the other hand, is it not wild fanaticism to suppose, that the end is to be attained, in an ordinary way, without the means? Is it not daring presumption to separate what God hath joined together? Christ has commanded us to be baptized, and baptism is made, every where in Scripture, essential to Church-membership. Oh no, say you, a point of external order cannot be at all essential to Church-membership; for that would be making externals essential to the existence of a Church, and putting them upon a par with the essence of religion. Well, Sir, we *do* make some externals essential to the being of a Church. So do *you*; so does your Confession of Faith; so do the holy Scriptures: all make a ministry essential to a Christian Church. But does any Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or any confession of faith, or the holy Scriptures, put the means upon a par with the end? Certainly not. A ministry and ordinances are essential to the being of a Church; but the ministry, the ordinances, the Church, are only *the means* which Christ has instituted to promote the most important of all possible ends—the salvation of mankind. But it is miserable logic to infer from the importance we attach to the ministry and the ordinances, that our Church, and yours, and the holy Scriptures, put the means upon a par with the end. How a man of your intellect could have run into so gross an error, is beyond my comprehension.

In truth, Sir, I do not know what to make of you, upon the subject of the Church. One while, you make a ministry and ordinances essential to the being of a visible Church—at another time, faith and holiness make us true members of the visible Church. At one time, the former are of the utmost importance—at another, they are not essential to a Church, and those who make them so, are bigots; putting circumstantials upon a footing with essentials—the means upon a par with the end. Thus, page 344, you say, 'Wherever the unfeigned love of our divine Saviour, an humble reliance on his atoning sacrifice, and a corresponding holiness of life pervade any denomination of Christians, we hail them as brethren in Christ; we acknowledge them to be a true Church; and although we may observe and lament imperfections in their outward government, we consider them as truly in covenant with the King of Zion as ourselves.'

This passage evidently means, that if we have but faith in CHRIST, and love for him, we are in *visible* covenant with him, although we belong to no Church possessing a ministry, and, consequently, have no sacraments nor covenanting rites. This directly contradicts the Scriptures, the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, your own assertions, and the declarations of your sensible coadjutors, Dr. Mason and Mr. M'Leod.

1. You contradict the *Scriptures*. They make the Christian Church a visible society, partaking of visible ordinances, administered by a visible ministry. *Your* Church consists of men possessing *invisible* graces—faith in CHRIST, and love for him.

The Scriptures make the visible Church to consist of good and bad members, as appears from the similitude of a net cast into the sea, which takes both good and bad fish; and of a marriage feast, which receives both good and bad guests. But *your* Church consists altogether of the good.

The Scriptures make a ministry essential to a visible Church, as appears from CHRIST's instituting a ministry to conduct all the affairs of his spiritual kingdom. But *your* Church requires no ministry.

Your Church is different from CHRIST's; inasmuch as he makes baptism essential to an admission into *his* Church. *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the* FATHER, *and of the* SON, *and of the* HOLY GHOST. *We are all baptized into one body*, says the Apostle Paul—into one visible body, or one visible Church.

If your account of the Church of CHRIST upon earth be true, then the least that can be said is, that he has *two* visible Churches upon earth, one of which consists altogether of good people, the other of both good and bad. But, according to the Scriptures, there is *but one* Church upon earth, and, accordingly, but *one hope of our calling*—the hope of seeing GOD in glory; *one faith* in FATHER, SON, *and* HOLY GHOST, and *one baptism*, by which we are made members of this one Church.

If all who profess faith in CHRIST, and love for him, are members of him, it was needless for St. Peter, when the Jews inquired of him, *What shall we do?* to say to them—*Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of* JESUS CHRIST, *for the remission of sins.* It was needless for the same Apostle to ask, in the case of Cornelius and his household—*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the* HOLY GHOST *as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the* LORD JESUS. It was needless for Paul, after he professed faith in CHRIST, and received the HOLY GHOST, to be baptized. But we find that he *was* baptized. *He arose*, says the text, *and was baptized.*

In short, the New Testament makes visible ordinances, and a visible ministry, essential to CHRIST's Church Militant upon earth.

2. You are also completely at warfare with your own *Confession of Faith.* The ministry and the sacrament, say that confession,[1] are essential to the Church. But your Church is very different from the Presbyterian Church. *Yours* makes faith in CHRIST, and love for him, all that are essential to a Christian Church.

3. You are at complete warfare with *yourself.* You say, p. 342, 'The Christian ministry and ordinances were given to edify the body of CHRIST, and are the great instruments which GOD does, in fact, employ for this purpose.' Consequently, they are essential to a Christian Church; for what GOD appoints, can never be indifferent.

Again you say, in the same page, 'We contend, that there is, and must ever be, more virtue and holiness in the Church of CHRIST, than out of it. We contend, in short, that in that household of GOD, to which his gracious promises, and his life-giving SPIRIT are vouchsafed, while we shall always find much corruption, we must expect to find, in general, much more of the life and power of religion, than among those who have no connexion with that household.'

Here, Sir, you talk like a Bible Christian. You make the Church of CHRIST to consist both of good and bad members; for, you say, there is in it 'much corruption.' You also call the Church 'the household of GOD,' which, of course, makes it a visible society. And you say, that to this 'household, GOD's gracious promises, and life-giving SPIRIT are vouchsafed.' Consequently, those who are out of this household, out of this visible society, are not entitled to these promises, and to GOD's life-giving SPIRIT. Is not this saying decisively, that faith will not make a man a member of CHRIST's visible Church?

Again you say, p. 8. 'We agree with our episcopal brethren in believing, that CHRIST hath appointed officers in his Church to preach the word, to administer sacraments, to dispense discipline, and to commit these powers to other faithful men.' What CHRIST has instituted in his Church as means of salvation, must be essential to his Church, and an angel from heaven has no power to abrogate them. Thus, *your* Church and CHRIST's are utterly irreconcileable; and thus also you are proved to be at complete warfare with yourself.

4. You are in direct opposition to your *coadjutor Dr. Mason.* He has been already quoted, saying—"Her, [the Church's] ministry enters into her very being." Can there be any Church then without a ministry? Can those who have faith and love, although united together upon sound doctrinal principles, be a Church without a ministry? Can they be initiated into the Church without a ministry? Not if Dr. Mason be right; and I am well satisfied that he is. There can be no Church-membership without baptism—no baptism without a

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1 Chap. xxv. 3. xxvii. 4. xxviii. 1.

ministry, and, consequently, no Church without both. So that it is impossible for a man, according to the Doctor, let his faith be ever so strong, and his love ever so ardent, to be a member of CHRIST's visible Church without a ministry, and without baptism.

You are also, Sir, completely at variance with Mr. M'Leod. He asserts,[k] "We are not to receive a man to communion, merely because he is regenerate; nor are we to reject him, merely because he is unregenerate.

"1. We are not officers of the invisible Church. Saintship is, in it, the criterion of membership.

"2. It is impossible that regeneration is the criterion of membership in the visible Church: no mere man can judge the heart. Upon this principle, we never could associate in the Church with confidence. We cannot be certain of one another's regeneration.

"3. It is presumption to say, that saintship is the criterion of visible membership. It condemns the conduct of CHRIST, and of the Apostles. CHRIST admitted as a member, and ordained as a minister, Judas, whom he knew to be unregenerate. Simon the sorcerer was a baptized Church member, while in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

"4. By a divine constitution, the Church of the Jews included some unregenerate men.

"5. The Christian visible Church, according to CHRIST's account of it, embraces some unregenerate men.

"Is it a vine? It has barren branches. Is it a field of grown corn? The tares must grow with the wheat untill the harvest. These tares are the children of the wicked one. This is not to be denied.

"6. The principle, that regeneration is the criterion of membership, is pregnant with mischief. 1. It encourages ignorance in ministers. 2. It is an engine of tyranny. 3. It encourages spiritual pride. 4. It is destructive to piety. 5. It encourages licentiousness. 6. It is a certain method of banishing saints from the Church, and of receiving hypocrites."

Thus, Sir, I have completely proved that you are at variance with Mr. M'Leod, with Dr. Mason, with yourself, with the Presbyterian Confession of faith, and with the holy Scriptures. And yet, Sir, you have written a book to give your 'Christian brethren' a true notion of the nature and constitution of the Christian Church.

It really, Sir, would be an endless business to attend to all the surmises, inconsistencies, and positive, unfounded assertions contained in your Letters. I shall therefore decline the unpleasant task, and proceed to a point of some importance—your view of the principles of the reformers of the *Church of England*. This will afford us a curious specimen of assertion without proof, and of misrepresentation without plausibility.

k *Catechism*, p. 99.

LETTER XIV.

REV. SIR:

I SHALL now examine whether the fathers of the Reformation in England were 'presbyterians in *principle*,' as you assert.[a]

Your first proof that they were, is taken from the book entitled, *The Institution of a Christian Man.* This book was published, as you correctly observe, in the year 1537, in the reign of Henry the Eighth. It was called *the Bishop's Book*, because it was composed by Archishop Cranmer, and several other prelates. You assert, that it is expressly said in this book, that 'although the fathers of the succeeding Church after the Apostles instituted certain inferior degrees of ministry; yet the truth is, that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any other degree or distinction in orders, but only of Deacons or Ministers, and of Presbyters or Bishops.'

I doubt, Sir, whether you are not as unfortunate in this quotation, as you have been in several others. The book you quote from, is so rare, that I am pretty well satisfied, there is not a man in this country who has seen it. Nearly a hundred years ago, Collier, who has given *an abstract* of it, said it was a very rare book. When he wrote his *Ecclesiastical History*, he had it before him, and in the abstract he has given us, there is not a syllable of what you have quoted; but much to the contrary. In relation to the authority of Bishops and Priests, he says,[b] "They [the compilers of *the Institution*] proceed to a more particular explanation of the authority of the clergy, and divide it into two branches;—*Potestas ordinis, et potestas jurisdictionis*, [Power of order, and power of jurisdiction.] Concerning the first, not being contested, they say nothing: the latter, touching jurisdiction committed to the hierarchy, they throw into three subdivisions. By the first, they are empowered to reprove immorality and misbelief, and excommunicate the obstinate and ungovernable.—By the second branch of jurisdiction, Bishops are authorized by our SAVIOUR to continue the succession, and perpetuate the hierarchy. They are the judges of the qualifications for priesthood, and may admit or refuse as they think fit."

They further observe, that "a third branch of jurisdiction, belonging to Bishops and Priests, comprehends the power of making canons for the discipline and service of the Church." Under this head, "they lay it down for a certain truth, that neither the Scripture, nor any father of the apostolical age, mentions our SAVIOUR's making any distinction or disparity in the Apostolical or Episcopal character; but that all the Apostles and Bishops were settled upon a foot of equality, with respect to jurisdiction and authority."

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a Letter V, p. 219.

b *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 140.

Now, Sir, it is evident from Collier's abstract of *the Institution*, that you have been led into an error by some prejudiced writer, from whom, most probably, you have taken your quotation. You assert, after your author, that *the Institution* maintains an equality among all the ministers of the gospel. This is not the truth. It maintains an equality among all the Apostles and Bishops, in opposition to *the Pope's* supremacy; but does not give the least hint of an equality among all the ministers of the gospel. This, Sir, shows how cautious we ought to be not to deliver ourselves up to the statements and opinions of others.

You proceed—'About six years after the publication of this book, another appeared, which was designed to promote the same laudable purposes. This was entitled, *The necessary Erudition of a Christian Man.* It was drawn up by a committee of Bishops and other divines; was afterwards read and approved by the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the lower house of Parliament, was prefaced by the King, and published by his command. This book certainly proves that those who drew it up, had obtained much more just and clear views of several important doctrines, than they possessed at the date of the former publication. But with regard to ministerial parity, their sentiments remained unchanged. They still asserted the same doctrine. They say, St. Paul consecrated and ordained Bishops by the imposition of hands; but that there is no certain rule prescribed in Scripture for the nomination, election, or presentation of them, [that is true] but that this is left to the positive laws of every community. [Undoubtedly!] The office of the said ministers is, to preach the word, to minister the sacraments, to bind and loose, to excommunicate those that will not be reformed, and to pray for the universal Church. Having afterwards mentioned the order of Deacons, they go on to say, "Of these two orders only, that is to say, Priests and Deacons, Scripture maketh express mention; and how they were conferred of the Apostles by prayer and imposition of hands."

Still I must have recourse to Collier. I have never seen *the Erudition*, nor do I believe that you, Sir, ever have. Like *the Institution*, it is an exceedingly rare book. Collier gives us an abstract of it. "The Erudition," says he, "makes *orders* one of the seven sacraments, and defines it a gift of grace for administration in the Church; that it is conveyed by consecration and imposition of the Bishop's hands; that in the beginning of Christianity, this character was given by the Apostles. The proof is drawn from the epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus."

This is sufficient proof that *the Erudition* maintains three orders in the Church. Notwithstanding this, there are to be found, according to Collier, the words which you have quoted, viz. "the Scripture speaks expressly of no more than the two orders of Priests and Deacons." There is undoubtedly a *seeming* contradiction between these two passages; and there is no

other way of reconciling them, but by saying as Collier does, that "under those called Priests or Presbyters, this book supposes, the episcopal character was meant; for that these two characters were distinct and subordinate, is plain from this *Erudition*." He then adds, that "this last book does not stand upon so strong an authority as the former. The *Institution* was the act of the whole clergy, and subscribed by both houses of Convocation. But the *necessary Erudition* was drawn up only by a committee of the King's nomination."[c]

The manner in which Collier reconciles the Reformers with themselves is perfectly easy and natural. It corresponds too with the manner of speaking of the Priests in the Old Testament. The High Priest, as I have several times mentioned, is very rarely distinguished from the other Priests. The usual distinction is—Priests and Levites. The fathers too, in a few instances, comprehended all the clergy under two divisions—Presbyters and Deacons. At other times, the same writers particularly distinguish the Bishop from the Presbyter. The High Priest was a Priest, and, therefore, he and the Priests were generally confounded; the Bishop is a Presbyter, and, therefore, Bishops and Presbyters were, and are still, sometimes comprehended under one title.

With respect to the two books which have thus engaged our attention, it may be observed, that they were intended for nothing more than *temporary* use. The Reformation in England, during the whole reign of Henry the Eighth, did not proceed beyond the state of infancy. Not a single article of importance, but the Pope's supremacy, was as yet altered. Cranmer, and all the other Bishops and divinès, who, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, made so great a figure in reforming the Church, were not, till that period, free from the prejudice of a Popish education. They were determined, however, to proceed, and to correct what was amiss in a very slow and gradual manner, according as they should be enabled to determine the true sense of Scripture. In the mean time, the two books in question were published for *temporary* use. Soon after, some of the doctrines of the Church of Rome were thoroughly canvassed by Cranmer and other divines, and pronounced to be inconsistent with Scripture, and the principles of the primitive Church in the purest and best ages. It is no wonder then, that while the mist in which they had been involved all their lives, was thus slowly dissipating, we should find some crude expressions, and some obscurity of ideas in the books in question. Read Collier's abstract of these two books, and you will find that to be the case, both with respect to doctrine and government. The mode which they adopted was the wisest that reason could suggest. They proceeded very cautiously in comparing the doctrines of the Church of Rome

c *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 190, 191.

with the Scriptures, and the earliest fathers. As they derived light from these sources, they declared their sentiments upon doctrinal subjects; and then they proceeded in the same cautious manner with respect to the constitution of the Church. They took nothing for granted, either with respect to doctrine or government, merely because it was entertained by the Church of Rome. On the contrary, they were very suspicious of the truth of every thing which that Church taught. Several questions relating to the orders of the priesthood were proposed in writing to the divines engaged in this business; and their judgments were accurately summed up, and set down by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This transaction should be dated in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and not ten years afterwards, as you assert, following either the *Irenicum*, or somebody that has implicitly followed that book. This appears beyond contradiction from Bishop Burnet, who has completely settled that point.

Now let it be considered, that all this important business was transacted in the very dawn of the Reformation, when but very few steps were taken towards a thorough change in doctrine and government. "The prepossessions of a Popish education," says Dr. Chandler,[d] "still operated in the minds of these honest searchers for truth; and it was owing, perhaps more to the force of these prepossessions, than to any other cause, that some of them have used expressions, which have since been construed to imply their having some doubts concerning the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters. The Popish schoolmen and canonists had been, for some ages, endeavouring to destroy the distinction between the two orders, of which Bishop Burnet gives a particular account, concluding it in these words: 'On this I have insisted the more, that it may appear how little they have considered things, who are so far carried with their zeal against the established government of the Church, as to make use of some passages of the schoolmen and canonists that deny them to be distinct orders; for these are *the very dregs of popery;* the one raising the Priests, for the sake of transubstantiation; the other pulling the Bishops lower, for the sake of the Pope's supremacy, and by such means bringing them almost to an equal.'[e] The like observation was made before by an eminent Archbishop, who says, we may justly ascribe the reviving of the Aerian heresy in these latter days, to the dispensations of the court of Rome, who licensed ordinary Priests to *ordain*, and *confirm*, and do the most essential offices of Bishops. So their schools do teach us, *a Priest may be the extraordinary minister of priesthood, and confer inferior orders by the delegation of the Pope.* Again—*The Pope may confer the power of confirmation upon a simple Priest.* By such exorbitant practices as these, they chalked out a way to innovators. And yet they are not able to produce a precedent of such dispensation, in the primitive times.'"[f]

d *Appeal defended*, p. 25. e *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I. p. 366.
f BRAMHALL'S *Works*, p. 431.

You proceed, Sir, to inform us, that 'five years after the last named publication, viz. about the year 1548, Edward the Sixth called a select assembly of divines, for the resolution of several questions relative to the settlement of religion. Of this assembly, Archbishop Cranmer was a leading member, and, to the tenth question, which respected the office of Bishops and Presbyters, that venerable prelate replied, "Bishops and Priests were, at one time, and were not two things, but *one office*, in the beginning of CHRIST's religion."

Now, Sir, in this opinion I can see nothing inconsistent with episcopal pre-eminence. I can subscribe to it without the least hesitation. We all agree, that *in the beginning of* CHRIST's *religion*, Presbyters were also called Bishops. Consequently they were different names for the same office. But here lies the fallacy. The word 'Bishop' in the eleventh question, was understood in the *appropriate* sense. The question is, "Whether a Bishop hath authority to make a Priest by the Scripture or not? And whether any other but only a Bishop may make a Priest?" To this, Dr. Cox answers—"Bishops [in the *appropriate* sense of the word] have authority, as is aforesaid, of the Apostles, in the tenth question, to make Priests, *except in cases of great necessity*." In his answer to the the tenth question, to which he refers, he had made this distinction—"*Bishops as they be now;* that is, as superior to Presbyters; *have authority to make Priests*." Dr. Redmayn gives his opinion in these words—"To the first part [that a Bishop, in the appropriate sense of the word, hath authority to make a Priest by Scripture] I answer, Yea; for so it appeareth, *Titus* i. and 1 *Tim.* v. with other places of Scripture. But whether any other but only a Bishop may make a Priest, I have not read, but by a singular privilege of GOD. As for *making*, that is to say, ordaining and consecrating of Priests, I think it specially belongeth to the office of a Bishop, as far as can be shown by Scripture, or any example, as I suppose from the beginning." And with Redmayn agree Thirleby, Symmons, Robertson, Leighton, and others. In short, they all agree, that none but Bishops have authority to make Priests—a few making an exception to cases of extreme necessity. Nothing can be more clear and decisive, with respect to the opinions of the English Reformers, than the statement of Burnet and Collier of the whole progress of that business.

From this view, given us by the above named historians, it is evident, that if this transaction *had* taken place, as you assert, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, the question relating to episcopacy would not be affected by it. All agree that it took place before the *Ordination Offices* were compiled; but Burnet clearly proves, in opposition to Stillingfleet, that the transaction occurred in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when the Reformers had made but little progress in the great work in which they were engaged; and that of course, even at that early period, they had become perfectly convinced from Scripture and the writings of the

fathers, that episcopacy was the true and proper government of the Christian Church.

Yet, Sir, you say, with Burnet in your hands, that he maintains, 'Such were the language and the views of Cranmer and other Prelates, in the reign of Edward the Sixth;'[g] when he, in direct terms, says the contrary. He dates the *questions and resolutions* to which I suppose you have reference, as far back as the year 1540, and observes, that he had "seen a much fuller paper concerning orders and ecclesiastical functions, signed, either in the year 1537 or 1538, since it is subscribed by Edward Fox, Bishop of Hereford, who died in May, 1538."[h]

You must have been misled, Sir, by somebody or other upon this point. You have confounded two distinct transactions, which happened, the one in the reign of Henry the Eighth, the other in the reign of Edward the Sixth. With respect to *the latter*, Burnet says, "This winter (1540) there was a committee of select Bishops and divines appointed for examining all the offices of the Church, and for reforming them. The thing they first examined was the sacrament of the Eucharist; which being the chief of Christian communion, was thought to deserve their chief care. And *here* they managed their inquiries *in the same manner* that was used in the former reign; in which, when any thing was considered in order to a change, it was put into several queries, to which every one in commission was to give his answer in writing. It is no wonder, if the confusion that followed in queen Mary's reign have deprived us of most of those papers; yet there is one set of them preserved, relating to some *questions about the priest's single communicating*."[i] I have looked over the questions to which Burnet refers, and I do declare, that there is not to be found in them one syllable upon the subject of episcopacy.

This evidence, together with Strype's, shows, in a satisfactory manner, that Stillingfleet was mistaken, in dating the transaction in question in the reign of Edward the Sixth. Burnet, in his history, corrected the error; and Stillingfleet never controverted the point, that we know of.

The circumstance, too, of the manuscript, which Burnet says he had seen, and which contains the 'questions and answers,' in a fuller manner than that of 1540, and which was clearly drawn up no later than in 1538, as it was signed by Fox, Bishop of Hereford, who died that year—affords strong proof, that the business had been begun in 1538, but was not completed till 1540. There is also strong internal evidence, that the 'questions and answers' were put out some years before the framing of the Articles of the Church, and the Offices of public worship, which took place in 1548. In the latter there was unanimity, in the former there was not. The minds of those excellent men were gradually

g Letter VI. p. 222.
h *History of the Reformation*, Addenda, Vol I. p. 289, 365.
i *History of the Reformation*, Vol. II. p. 51.

enlightened; it was scarcely possible that it should have been otherwise. But if the business of the 'questions and answers' took place in the same year in which the Articles, &c. were framed, the reformers must have had the light of truth break in upon them very suddenly indeed; for in the former, there is much crudeness of expression, some difference of opinion, and some singularity of sentiment. But every thing has a different aspect in the Articles and Offices of the Church. These circumstances are, I think, sufficient to convince every impartial person, that you have been misled by Stillingfleet, or somebody else, in dating the 'questions and answers,' in 1548.

But notwithstanding this correct view of the whole business given by Burnet and Collier, you still push forward with zeal to carry your point. You say, 'Another circumstance, which serves to show that Archbishop Cranmer considered the episcopal system in which he shared, as founded rather in *prudence* and the *will of the magistrate*, than the *word of* GOD, is, that he viewed the exercise of all episcopal jurisdiction as depending on the pleasure of the King, and that, as he gave it, so he might take it away at pleasure. Agreeably to this, when Henry the Eighth died, the worthy primate regarded his own episcopal power as expiring with him; and therefore would not act as Archbishop till he had received a new commission from King Edward.'

There is, Sir, nothing in this world easier, than to mis-state facts, and superinduce false colours upon truth. Your unlearned and prejudiced readers have, no doubt, been greatly misled by your numerous mis-statements, and your extremely plausible assertions. No doubt you mean what you say, and are perfectly free from any intention of giving a wrong view of the subject. But how to acquit you from negligence in the investigation of facts, I declare, Sir, I do not know; and therefore shall not attempt it.

That Archbishop Cranmer took out a new commission for the exercise of his office, is true; but it was not upon the principle which you mention. It is undeniable, that it was the doctrine of the King, the Bishops, and the whole nation, that authority to administer the sacraments, and to perform all other spiritual offices, was derived, not from the crown, but from CHRIST. This doctrine was explicitly maintained in the *Institution of a Christian Man*, as you will see by consulting Collier. And that it was maintained by the King, is evident from a letter of his to the convocation of the province of York, explaining the supremacy. That letter you will find in Dr. Chandler's *Appeal defended*, p. 54. Therein the King makes a clear distinction between the *temporal* and *spiritual* powers of the Bishops; the *former* he derives from the *state*, the *latter* from CHRIST. It is, therefore, evident, that what was meant to be given by the King, was nothing more than a *legal* right to exercise that spiritual function, which was derived from CHRIST, and a juris-

diction relating to matters testamentary, matrimonial, &c. which was derived from the state. Afterwards, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, from 1548 to 1553, Bishops were commonly appointed by the King's Letters Patent. "By those letters," says Bishop Burnet, "it is clear, that the episcopal function was acknowledged to be of *divine appointment*, and that the person was no other way named by the King, than as *lay patrons* present to livings; only the Bishop was *legally* authorized in such a part of the King's dominions, to execute that function which was to be derived to him by imposition of hands."[k]

This, Sir, is the true state of the matter; and it evidently shows how very incorrect you are, when you advance Cranmer's taking out a new commission after the death of Henry, as a proof that he believed episcopacy was a mere human institution.

As a further proof that Cranmer believed the episcopal office to be of apostolical institution, let us have recourse again to the 'questions and resolutions.' To the eleventh question, Dr. Leighton thus answers: "I suppose that a Bishop hath authority of God, as his minister, by Scripture, to make a Priest; but he ought not to admit any man to be a Priest, and consecrate him, or to appoint him to any ministry in the Church, without the Prince's license and consent. And that any other man hath authority to make a Priest by Scripture, I have not read, nor any example thereof." To the twelfth question, Leighton answers: "I suppose there is a consecration required, as by imposition of hands; for so we be taught in the ensample of the Apostles." Durell, in his *Vindiciæ*, says, that having had an opportunity of examining the original manuscript, he found that Cranmer gave his consent to Leighton's opinions upon this subject, subscribing to each *Thos. Cantuariensis.*[l] This is a decisive proof, that the Archbishop was, at that period, a correct Episcopalian.

Before that time, Cranmer seems indeed to have had too high a notion of the power of the magistrate; and it appears from the above answer, that Leighton also had; and it may be, for any thing I know to the contrary, that all the reformers of the Church of England had the same tincture. Burnet says: "In Cranmer's papers, some singular opinions about the nature of ecclesiastical offices will be found; but as they are delivered by him with all possible modesty, so they are not established as the doctrine of the Church, but laid aside as particular conceits of his own; and it seems, that *afterwards he changed his opinion.* For he subscribed the book that was soon after set out, which is *directly contrary* to those opinions set down in those papers."[m] These are sufficient proofs, that Cranmer and the other reformers were far enough from being Presbyterians in *principle*, as you incautiously assert.

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k *History of the Reformation*, Vol. II. p. 128.
l CHANDLER'S *Appeal defended*, p. 26, 27.
m *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I. p. 289.

But as some men, from one cause or other, are very hard to be convinced, I will add more evidencc with respect to Cranmer.

Bishop Burnet informs us, that in 1548, Cranmer compiled a *Catechism*, or "large instruction of young persons in the grounds of the Christian religion;" in which, says my author, "he fully owns the divine institution of Bishops and Priests." Cranmer also published, at the same time, a sermon *on the authority of the keys*, which is as highly episcopal as any thing can be. In that sermon are the following words. I shall give them according to our modern spelling. "They that were so ordained, were indeed, and also were called, the ministers of God, as the Apostles themselves were, as Paul saith unto Timothy. And so the ministration of God's word, (which our Lord Jesus Christ himself did first institute) was derived from the Apostles unto others after them by imposition of hands, and giving the Holy Ghost, from the Apostles down to our days. And this was the consecration, orders, and unction of the Apostles, whereby they, at the beginning, made Bishops and Priests, and this shall continue in the Church, even to the world's end."

But even these proofs, convincing as they are, do not close the evidence upon this point. I appeal to the Ordination Offices, which are the public standards of the Church, and which were compiled by Cranmer and others in the year 1550.[n] You, Sir, indeed, endeavour to preclude us from that plea, by observing, that 'those who insist on this argument, forget that the Ordination Service, as it *now stands*, differs considerably from that which was drawn up by Cranmer and his associates. If I mistake not, that Service, as it came from the hands of the reformers, did not contain a sentence inconsistent with the opinions which I have ascribed to them.' Thus you assert, Sir, but give us no proof whatever of the correctness of your assertion. Professing as you do, to have nothing in view but to lead your 'Christian brethren' into truth, you ought certainly to have laid before them the evidence upon which you ground your assertion. But this you have not done in the smallest degree. I also think, Sir, that *we* are entitled to some respect. When you say *we* are wrong, you ought to prove upon solid grounds that we are so. You can hardly suppose, that we shall take your assertion for proof; especially after the numerous specimens you have given us, that there is a wide difference between *asserting* and *proving*. Were I to assert that *you* are mistaken upon this point, it would prove just as much as your saying that *we* are. Really, Sir, this mode of discussion is far beneath a scholar and a man of sense.

But to come to the point. In the year 1549, not long after Edward's accession to the throne, an act passed *the parliament* for drawing up an Ordinal. The act being short, I shall transcribe from Collier so much as will answer my purpose. After

n Burnet. *Hist. Reform.* Vol. II. p. 143, 144.

premising the object of the act to be concord and unity, it proceeds to say—"It is requisite to have one uniform fashion and manner for making and consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, or Ministers of the Church. Be it, therefore, enacted by the King's Highness, with the assent of the Lords, spiritual and temporal, and the Commons in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that such form and manner of making, and consecrating of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and other ministers of the Church, &c."[o]

From this act it is evident, that the formation of different offices for different orders, was contemplated. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose, that the intention of the act was fulfilled, and that different offices were actually framed for different orders. This was, in fact, the case.

But those who are ever looking out for some slight defect, upon which they may ground an objection, have said, that in the Ordinal set forth in Edward's reign, the words for conveying the Bishop's character, are not the same as in the present Ordinal. Thus, in the latter, the words are—"Receive the HOLY GHOST for the office and work of a Bishop," &c. But in the former, the words were—"Take the HOLY GHOST, remember that thou stir up," &c. Here, say they, the word *Bishop* was not used, and, therefore, it could not have been determined to what office the person on whom hands were laid, was designed.

This, Sir, is one of the weakest and most idle cavils I have ever seen. It was first started by the Papists; and the Puritans, although folly is marked upon "the head and front" of it, were not ashamed to repeat it. Collier, in answer to it, observes,[p] that "although the word *Bishop* is not used, (at the time of imposing hands) yet there is a plain distinction in other parts of the office. For instance, there is an express declaration of two Bishops, that the person present is to be consecrated to their own order. There are more questions put to him by the Archbishop, than are mentioned in the office for ordaining Priests; some of which suppose a superior authority in his character, and that the exercise of discipline, and the government of a diocese, are branches of his function. The Archbishop, and two other Bishops, lay their hands upon the head of the elect; whereas, at the ordination of a Priest, this rite is performed by the *diocesan* with some Priests assisting." It is, therefore, not to be denied with any appearance of reason, that the first and second Ordinal are precisely the same as to intention, distinction of office, and conveyance of authority.

As a further proof that a new office was conferred by the *old* Ordinal, I would observe, in the words of Dr. Chandler, that, "in the ordination of Presbyters, a distinction of their office from that of Bishop, immediately follows. They are declared to have, and the declaration implies that they have, in virtue of

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o *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 286.

p *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 291.

that ordination, only the power of absolving penitents, and of dispensing the word and sacraments; and *that* in such congregations as they should be appointed to. There is not the least appearance of episcopal powers, nor of any authority which is not at this day given by the Church of England to Presbyters. But in the ordination of Bishops, there is not the least restraint; the words are left general, as they were used by CHRIST in ordaining his Apostles; and all the ordinary authority, which they were originally intended to express, is conveyed by them without diminution. So that in one case, there is only a limited commission given; but in the other, a commission without any restriction or limitation, and, consequently extending to *all* ecclesiastical offices, which, in fact, is also intended."[q]

Bishop Burnet also argues correctly and forcibly upon this point.—"It is to be considered, that ecclesiastical orders being from the influence and operation of the HOLY GHOST, which being one, yet hath *different operations* for the *different administrations*; therefore, the concomitant actions, words, and circumstances must show, for *which* administration the HOLY GHOST is prayed for, since that general prayer is made for all; but the functions being different, the same HOLY GHOST works differently in them all. Therefore, it is plain from the practice of our SAVIOUR, that there is no need of expressing, in the very words of ordination, *what* power is thereby given, since our SAVIOUR did not express it, but what he said both before and after, did determine the sense of those general words to the apostolical function. The whole office of consecrating Bishops, (for instance) shows very formally and expressly what power is given in those (general) words. So that a Priest being presented to be made a Bishop, the King's mandate being read for that effect, he swearing canonical obedience as Bishop elect; prayers being put up for him as such, together with other circumstances which make it plain what they are about; *those* general words are by *these* qualified and restrained to that sense."

What can be the reason, Sir, when you revived this idle cavil, that you did not extend it to the ordination of Priests likewise? You must certainly know, that in the old ordinal, the word *Priest* was not used at the time of imposing hands; and, therefore, if the objection has any force in the one case, it has equal force in the other; and then there was no distinction made by the old ordinal between the office of a Presbyter, and that of a Deacon. Thus would the whole ministry of the Church of England be demolished at a stroke; and, let me add, the Presbyterian ministry too; as it was derived in Great Britain principally, if not altogether, from the Bishops of that Church. This, I suppose, Sir, you thought, would be carrying the matter too far.

Indeed, Sir, it is too gross a reflection upon the English

q *Appeal further defended*, p. 42, 43.

reformers, who are acknowledged by all the world to have been great and good men, to suppose that they would compose different offices, for the ordination of Bishops and Priests, if they believed them to hold the same office. Is it possible, that men who had any conscience, would perform the solemn farce of reinvesting the Bishop elect with the same powers which he received when he was ordained a Priest? Can any one who knows the characters of those divines, suppose that they would be so profligate as to invoke the ALMIGHTY for his blessing upon them in communicating those powers, which they had no intention of communicating, as the person was supposed to be invested with them already? Sir, this cavil carries folly upon the face of it, and must ever be considered by every man who has any pretensions to impartiality, to be as weak as it is ungenerous.

As a further proof that the reformers maintained a distinction of offices in the Church, they expressly said, in their preface to the old Ordinal,—

"It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in CHRIST'S Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

Still farther: The prayers in the old Ordinal expressly mentioned the appointment of divers orders by the HOLY GHOST.[r] Thus, at the ordination of a Bishop, the prayer was just the same as it is now.—"ALMIGHTY GOD, giver of all good things, who, by thy HOLY SPIRIT, hast appointed divers orders of Ministers in thy Church—mercifully behold this thy servant now called to the work and ministry of a Bishop," &c. The same declaration, that the HOLY SPIRIT appointed divers orders in the Church, was likewise in the prayers used at the ordination of a Priest, and of a Deacon.

Now it is a consequence obvious to common sense, that when a *committee* was appointed for the express purpose of composing distinct offices for the ordination of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—when three distinct offices were actually composed—when in the preface to these offices, three distinct orders were particularly enumerated; and when in the prayers of each office, it is expressly declared, that *divers orders* were appointed by the HOLY GHOST; and, lastly, when in the service for consecrating a Bishop, it is explicitly said, that *the elect* is to be admitted into the office of a Bishop—when, I say, these things are considered, it is obvious to common sense, that the reformers believed that Bishops were superior to Presbyters by apostolic institution, or else they were the most odious hypocrites that ever disgraced the Christian Church. I do not see, Sir, how it is possible for you to avoid adopting one part or other of this alternative.

It is really a curiosity in the region of controversy, that *you*,

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r See BRETT *on Episcopacy*, p. 152; and BURNET, *Hist. of Ref.* Vol. II. p. 142.

Sir, and Dr. Chauncy, in this country, and Mr. Neal, and others, in England, should have recourse to so pitiful a cavil, as to infer from the word *Bishop* not having been used at the imposition of hands, that, therefore, there was no intention of conveying any authority beyond what the Bishop elect was invested with, when he was ordained a Priest; when the objection of the *whole body* of Puritans to these offices was, that they *do* make the office of a Bishop superior to that of a Priest. In their *Short Table of sundry Exceptions*, &c. p. 99, they place it under the article of *defects* in the public service, that "the Priest receiveth in his ordination no authority to govern the flock, and exercise the discipline of CHRIST, but only to preach and administer the sacraments;" whereas, in the office for consecrating a Bishop, that power is expressly conferred—"Be to the flock of CHRIST a shepherd, not a wolf—be so merciful, that ye be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that ye forget not mercy." Under the head of *untruths*, they rank the preface to the Ordinal, in which the three orders are expressly mentioned; and, to crown all, they rank under the head of *Popish errors*, that "Deacons, Priests, Bishops, and Archbishops, are made several orders and degrees of ministry."[a] [By the way, Archbishops were never considered a distinct order; nor were they ever ordained to that office; and that the Puritans must have known very well.]

I think, Sir, I may now, with great propriety, address you in the words used by Bishop Madox, in reply to Mr. Neal, upon the same point. "Nothing, sure, but the impossibility of supporting your scheme, and proving the parity of Presbyters and Bishops any other way, could have put you upon this method of attempting it. You, indeed, have undertaken a difficult task, and must, therefore, have great allowances in the execution of it. The sense and practice of the whole Christian Church for fifteen hundred years, in a form of church government, so *early*, so *universally*, so *constantly* received, were great obstacles. No instances of Presbyters executing the distinguishing offices of a Bishop; no example of any man's being a Bishop one day, and reduced to a mere Presbyter the next, as must have been the case, had a Bishop, as is sometimes alleged, been no more than a Chairman, a Moderator, or temporary President of a presbytery; no instances of many Bishops for places where there were many Priests: on the contrary, we always find one particular person mentioned as the Bishop, and sole Bishop of one particular city, even where there were many Presbyters. This being the case, other methods were to be tried, and the very form of consecrating a Bishop, who had *before been ordained* a Priest, be employed to prove there was, in the opinion of the *compilers* of that *form*, no such order as Bishops in the Church—all were Presbyters, and nothing more, not only the order, but the very office the same."

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a See MADOX against NEAL.

Will you, Sir, take Bishop Burnet's account of the opinions of the reformers upon this point? "In the ancient Church," says he, "they knew none of those subtilties which were found out in the latter ages. It was then thought enough, that a Bishop was to be dedicated to his function by a new imposition of hands, and that several offices could not be performed without Bishops; such as ordination, confirmation, &c.[t] But they did not refine in these matters so much as to inquire, whether Bishops and Priests differed in *order* and *office*, or only in *degree*. But after the *Schoolmen* fell to examine matters of divinity with logical and unintelligible niceties, and the *Canonists* began to comment upon the rules of the ancient Church, they studied to make Bishops and Priests seem very near one another, so that the difference was but small. They did it with different designs. The Schoolmen having set up the grand mystery of *transubstantiation*, were to exalt the priestly office as much as was possible; for the turning the host into God, was so great an action, that they reckoned there could be no office higher than that which qualified a man to so mighty a performance.—But as *they* designed to extol the order of Priesthood, so the *Canonists* had as great mind to depress the episcopal order. They generally wrote for preferment, and the way to it was to exalt the papacy. Nothing could do that so effectually as to bring down the power of Bishops." After several other observations, Burnet says, "*These are the very dregs of popery;*" and then concludes with these strong words: "So partial are some men to their particular conceits, that they make use of the most mischievous topics when they can serve their turn, not considering how much farther these arguments will run, if they ever admit them."[u]

It now, Sir, appears beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the compilers of the old Ordinal acknowledged three distinct orders in the Church, as the preface to the Ordinal evinces—that they declared there were, by divine appointment, divers orders of ministers—that they composed a distinct office for the ordination of each order—that there could be no dispute *to which* of these orders the person ordained was admitted, nor what were the peculiar duties of his office—and that all this was approved of, and consented to by the Bishops and clergy, and established by the King and Parliament. Still it must be admitted, that adding the words—"for the office and work of a Bishop" in the one office, and "for the office and work of a Priest" in the other, completely removed the objection which the Puritans and Papists made to these offices; and entirely freed those *candid* inquirers after truth from that unhappy necessity, which they thought themselves under, of obscuring what was sufficiently clear to unprejudiced minds.

But notwithstanding all this clear and decisive evidence, we

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[t] MADOX against NEAL, p. 64, 65. [u] *Hist. of Ref.* Vol. I. p. 266.

have not yet come to the close of this part of the discussion. As a further argument in proof of your point, you observe, that "when these great reformers went further than to compile temporary and fugitive manuals; when they undertook to frame the fundamental and permanent Articles of their Church we find them carefully guarding against any exclusive claim in behalf of diocesan episcopacy. If they had deemed an order of Bishops superior to Presbyters, indispensably necessary to the regular organization of the Church, and the validity of Christian ordinances, can we suppose that men who showed themselves so faithful and zealous in the cause of CHRIST, would have been wholly silent on the subject? And above all, if they entertained such an opinion, would they have forborne to express it in that article in which they undertook formally to state the doctrine of their Church with respect to the Christian ministry?' That Article (the 23d) is couched in the following terms: "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men, who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the LORD'S vineyard." You say that, 'there is not a syllable said of diocesan Bishops, or of the necessity of episcopal ordination; on the contrary, there is most evidently displayed a studious care to employ such language as would embrace the other reformed Churches, and recognize as valid their ministry and ordinances.'[v]

To this I answer, 1st. The question between us is not, whether the reformers of the Church of England believed that Presbyterian ordination is valid, where no other can be had, but whether episcopacy is of apostolical and divine institution? That they believed it is, has been proved beyond all reasonable contradiction; and that the twenty-third Article does not contradict that opinion, is perfectly clear.

2d. It was not the business of the reformers to say in the above Article, that the divine institution of episcopacy necessarily precludes from the character of Churches, those which have not the order of Bishops. They said enough when they declared, that "it is evident from holy Scripture, and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' times, there have been these orders of ministers in the Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons;" and when they said, that "no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly episcopal consecration or ordination."

v Letter VI. p. 223.

3d. It is clear, beyond all controversy, from the above declarations, that the reformers maintained the apostolical institution of episcopacy; and, therefore, when they say, in the 23d Article, that "it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same;" the words "before he be lawfully called and sent," must necessarily be interpreted by the words in the preface to the ordinal, viz: "No man shall be accounted or taken for a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, except he be called according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly episcopal consecration or ordination." Here it is evident, that the reformers consider none as lawful Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, without episcopal ordination; at the same time, they say nothing about Presbyterian ordination, leaving it to shift for itself upon the plea of necessity, or any other plea its advocates may advance in its favour. This, considering the danger to which the whole reformation was exposed, was a mark of prudence; but I think no impartial and candid man can consider it as affording the smallest proof, that the reformers did not consider episcopacy as of divine institution, and presbyterian ordination as irregular, and totally destitute of apostolic sanction.

I know it *has* been said, although *you* do not say it, that by the word "lawful," is meant, *according to the law of the land.* But I do not see how that can be; for the King and Parliament, who alone have authority to make laws, did not draw up the Offices and Articles of religion, but the Bishops and clergy assembled in convocation, who have ever been esteemed the proper expositors of the law of GOD. When the clergy, therefore, declare any thing to be lawful or unlawful, they must necessarily be understood, *according to the law of* GOD. For the *judges*, not the *clergy*, are the proper expositors of *the law of the land.* This evasion, therefore, is totally inadmissible.

Lastly. It might as well be argued by the advocates for lay ordination, from there being no mention of Presbyters in the 23d Article, that the Church of England does not require so much as Presbyters to lay on their hands in ordination, as that she does not require Bishops to lay on their hands, because nothing is said in that article about diocesan Bishops. The argument, in respect to the former, is just as conclusive as in respect to the latter. But this proves too much: and, therefore, by a rule of logic, proves nothing.

I shall close this head, and this letter, with noticing your quotation from Bishop Burnet. The quotation amounts to this, that the reformers did not magisterially pronounce a sentence of *invalidity*, upon the orders of the reformed Churches upon the continent. That is very true. It was not their business to do so in direct and pointed terms. But let any man consider the genuine consequence of the declaration of the reformers. They say there were three orders instituted by the Apostles—Bishops, Priests,

and Deacons: that to Bishops belongs the right of ordaining: and that none shall be considered lawful Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, unless they have been episcopally consecrated or ordained. Let any one, I say, consider the genuine consequence of these declarations, and then if he can see any thing in the article of a comprehensive nature, I shall not be so hostile to his repose, as to attempt to deprive him of the comfort he can derive from it.

When, Sir, you quoted Burnet, why did you not give us the last words of the passage which you adduced? Those words are: "Necessity has no law, and is a law to itself." From this it is evident, that he predicates all that he says upon *necessity*. Read the whole that he says upon the Article, and you will see that all his observations rest upon that ground.

To conclude: It is very evident from what has appeared in this letter, that Burnet fully believed the apostolical and divine institution of episcopacy; yet, he had some how or other a way of satisfying himself, that the want of episcopal orders renders a Church only *irregular* and *unsound*; but does not invalidate her ministry. Upon this point, unanimity among Episcopalians cannot reasonably be expected.

I shall now conclude with the testimony of the learned historian, Mosheim. Of the Church of England, he says, "It constantly insisted on the divine origin of its government and discipline."*

LETTER XV.

REV. SIR:

I SHALL continue the consideration of your train of arguments in support of your assertion, that the reformers of the Church of England were Presbyterian in principle.

I think that I have already said quite sufficient to show, that you are very far from being correct in this assertion. But as you endeavour to support it by other arguments, it is expedient, if not necessary, for me to canvass every thing material that you have said.

You observe, that 'an act of Parliament was passed in the thirteenth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to reform certain *disorders touching ministers of the Church*;' and that 'this act was framed with an express view to admitting into the Church of England, those who had received Presbyterian ordination, in the foreign reformed Churches, on their subscribing the articles of faith.'a That there was an act passed in the thirteenth of Elizabeth,

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* Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. p. 231.

a Letter VI. p. 228.

to reform certain disorders, &c. is true; but that it was with 'an express view of admitting into the Church, those who had received Presbyterian ordination,' does not at all appear from the act. You ought, Sir, to have given your readers that part of the act which relates to the present subject. It runs thus: Be it enacted, "that every person, under the degree of a Bishop, which doth, or shall pretend to be a Priest, or Minister of GOD's holy word and sacraments, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering, than the form set forth by Parliament, in the time of the late King, or now used in the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lady, *before the feast of the nativity of* CHRIST *next following*, shall, in the presence of the Bishop, declare his assent, and subscribe to all the articles of religion—and shall bring from such Bishop, in writing under his seal authentic, a testimonial of such assent and subscription—upon pain that every such person, *which shall not, before the said feast, do as is appointed*, shall be, (*ipso facto*) deprived."[b]

From this act it is evident, that the case of the foreign Presbyterian Churches, and the validity of ordination by Presbyters, were not at all contemplated. There is not a syllable said about either. It speaks indeed of those who pretended to be Priests by an ordinal different from that of King Edward's; but by that was principally, if not exclusively meant, such as were ordained by the Popish ordinal. But what a valid ordination is, the act does not say. We must have recourse for that to the Preface of the Ordinal, which expressly makes episcopal ordination the only lawful mode. The act does not say, that all who were ordained by Presbyters, or in any other manner, should, *upon subscription*, be allowed to hold livings in the Church. That would have been a direct contradiction of the act passed in the reign of Edward; and therefore, such an extension should not be given to it.

Let it further be considered, that it was the avowed doctrine of the Church throughout the whole reign of Elizabeth, that episcopal ordination was of divine appointment, and then it will be evident, that the act in question could not have been designed to indulge, under the specified condition, those who had received no other orders but Presbyterian.

To confirm your opinion, that this act was intended to comprehend those who had received no other orders but Presbyterian, you observe, "that Dr. Strype, an eminent Episcopalian, informs us, that this act was framed with an express view to admitting into the Church of England, those who had received Presbyterian ordination in the foreign reformed Churches, on their subscribing the Articles of Faith.

You ought, Sir, in order to give your readers a correct view of what Strype says, to have given us his own words. They are as follows: "It concerned all such persons as pretended

b GIBSON's *Codex*, p. 396, and SPARROW's *Collection*, p. 118.

to be Priests and Ministers of God's word and sacraments under the degree of a Bishop, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering, than the form set forth in the late King Edward's time, and now used in the reign of the Queen. Meaning, undoubtedly, to comprehend Papists, and likewise such as received their ordination in *some* of the foreign reformed Churches, when they were in exile under Queen Mary."[c] From this it is evident, that Strype did not mean to comprehend *all* the reformed Churches. He expressly says *some* of them; most probably the Churches of Sweden, Denmark, and Bohemia. By the Church in Bohemia is meant the reformed Church in that kingdom, which was deemed episcopal.

Notwithstanding these, in my judgment, decisive observations, with which I can hardly suppose you are unacquainted, (for they are not new) you proceed thus: 'The conduct of the English reformers corresponded with their laws and public standards. They invited several eminent divines from the foreign reformed Churches, who had received no other than Presbyterian ordination, to come over to England; and, on their arrival, in consequence of this formal invitation, actually bestowed upon them important benefices in the Church, and in the universities.' Pray, Sir, from whom did you receive this information? What can be the reason that you will not give us your authority for what you advance as facts? I have never, in the whole course of my reading, met with any controversial writings, in this respect, like yours. You heap quotation upon quotation, without condescending to give us the chapter, the page, or even the volume; and you have repeatedly advanced things as matters of facts without exhibiting the testimony by which the facts are supported. Thus, in the instance under consideration, you assert, that several foreign divines, who had only Presbyterian ordination, were allowed to hold benefices in England. Who were those foreign divines? You have not told us. I will supply the omission. They were, P. Martyr, M. Bucer, and P. Fagius. The two last were never admitted to any ecclesiastical benefice. They were admitted to nothing but academical preferments. The first, indeed, had an ecclesiastical preferment; but he was previously ordained by a Bishop.[d] Thus, these turn out like most of your other facts.

You still proceed: 'Besides inviting these distinguished divines into England, Archbishop Cranmer and Grindal, and their associates, corresponded with Calvin, solicited his opinion respecting many points in the reformation of the Church, and not only acknowledged him in the most explicit manner, to be a regular minister of CHRIST, and the Church of Geneva to be a sister Church, but also addressed him in terms of the most

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c *Annals of the Reformation*, lib. 1. chap. 7. An. 1571.
d CHANDLER'S *Appeal Defended*, p. 43.

exalted reverence, and heaped upon him every epithet of honour.'

Still no proof. *You*, Sir, have said it, and that is enough. But let it be, that the English reformers held Calvin in reverence; what does that prove? Does it prove that they acknowledged the validity of ordination by Presbyters? You certainly will not draw that inference from it. The truth is, that they respected Calvin for his talents, learning, and zeal; while, at the same time, they censured his arrogant, tyrannical spirit. No one can deny that in the exercise of his ministerial authority, the Roman Pontiff himself was scarcely his equal for tyranny and arrogance. Of this I could give abundant proof, were it necessary. But the fact is too notorious to need it. The Reformers knew this very well; and therefore, when he offered his services, they civilly rejected the offer. This displeased him to such a degree, that although he had before spoken handsome things of the Church of England, yet, from that time, he began to say harsh things of her; still his talents and learning commanded respect, and he became the oracle of one part of the reformation. The respect, then, which the English divines paid to Calvin, was the result of that principle of human nature, which irresistibly impels us to admit talents and learning. This, I believe, is the whole of the matter.

But you, Sir, will have it, that the Reformers admitted the validity of his orders, and acknowledged the Church of Geneva to be a true Church. Allowing that to be the case, it was upon no other ground than that of *necessity*, which is the very ground upon which Calvin himself, at first, placed it. But, Sir, I doubt very much whether the Reformers ever considered Calvin in the light of a minister; for it is very uncertain, whether he received even Presbyterian ordination; any other he certainly did not. Dr. Leaming, in his controversy with Mr. Welles, positively asserts, that Beza and Papirius Massinius declare that he never was ordained. Reeves too, in the preface to his *Apologies*, bears the same testimony. Beza must have been perfectly acquainted with the matter; for he was Calvin's intimate friend. Nor had Calvin, before he left France, episcopal orders, if we may believe Du Pin. It is well known that he was originally intended for the Church, having received an appointment in the Cathedral of Noyon, before he was twelve years of age. He afterwards held the cure of Manteville, which he exchanged for that of Pont l'Eveque; but this happened in 1529, when he was under age. And Du Pin positively says, that "he possessed these benefices without being in ecclesiastical orders;" and it is certain that about this time he gave up his preferments in the Church, and applied himself to the study of the law; so that it is not at all probable, that after quitting the Church for the law, he was afterwards episcopally ordained. Indeed, it is plain, not only from Du Pins' testimony that he was not, but from this circumstance also;—that before he was twenty-three years of

age, he embraced the new doctrines as they were then called; and he certainly after that, neither *would*, nor *could* have been ordained in the Church of Rome. And, after this period, it does not appear from any document whatever, that he ever received any thing like an ordination. It is then pretty clear, that Calvin had no other pretensions to the ministerial character, than what was founded on the election of him by the magistrates and people of Geneva, to be their preacher and professor of divinity. And yet, no doubt, this lay professor of divinity ordained numbers; and thus, a spurious brood of ministers, even upon Presbyterian principles, was introduced into that Church; and, consequently, there can be no probability of a clear, uninterrupted succession of ministers from that source.

Now, Sir, if these things be so, it is not at all probable, that the reformers of the Church of England would have explicitly acknowledged Calvin's ministerial character. You must produce positive proof for that; and further, if you should, you must show, that what they said was *not* grounded upon the consideration of his ordination being a case of necessity; but that it was the opinion of the reformers, that ordination by Presbyters, upon all ordinary occasions, is lawful. I am sorry, Sir, to give you all this trouble; but as you have brought Calvin upon the board, it is necessary that you should help him out of his difficulties, as well as you can.

You proceed to give us another case, which shows, in your judgment, in what light the reformers of the Church of England viewed Presbyterian ordination. The case is that of John Morrison, a Presbyterian minister, who was licensed by Archbishop Grindal to preach, &c. in the province of Canterbury. Well, Sir, this being the fact, what is the inference? Precisely this—that Grindal *thought* ordination by Presbyters valid; but not that his opinion *made* it so. Now, if this be the only logical inference, we need not give ourselves much trouble about it. I have, however, some considerations to offer, to which I request your attention.

1. Whatever may become of this case, it is a curious circumstance, that you should urge it as a proof of the principles of the reformers. Grindal was not one of them; he was not Archbishop of Canterbury till the reign of Elizabeth; and the event you have adduced, did not take place till near thirty years after the reformation. How is it possible, Sir, that you could have run into such an error? Nor would it follow, if he *had* been one of the reformers, and Archbishop of Canterbury at that time, and had done just as he did in respect of Morrison, that the other reformers were of his opinion. That is no consequence. The result simply is, that *Grindal* thought Presbyterian orders valid. But what has that to do with the principles of the reformers? Just as much as with the principles of Confucius.

2. Let us consider what sort of a man Grindal was. He is said to have been remiss in his discipline; insomuch that the

government took notice of it. Collier[e] has recorded a letter from the Privy Council to him, in which they complain of his conduct, and enjoin for the future a stricter discipline, and a more punctual execution of the ecclesiastical laws upon all the violators of them. But what places in a striking point of light the turn of his mind, is the encouragement he gave to what was then called *prophesying*. This was a sort of preaching much in vogue among the more enthusiastic part of the clergy. The result was much confusion, shameful irregularity, and great injury to the Church. "The exercise of prophesying," says Collier,[f] "was attended with several inconveniences. It gave opportunity to the spreading of erroneous doctrine. For that purpose, those who were suspended, or deprived for nonconformity, ventured to appear at these meetings. And here they took the liberty to declare against the government and liturgy of the Church. And sometimes their satire was played upon the state. Sometimes they glanced upon persons, and ran out into particular invectives. And sometimes the laity undertook the argument, and held forth. In short, the exercises at last were remarkable for squabbling, and unnecessary disputes, and failed in the requisites of charity and discretion."

Now, who would suppose that Archbishop Grindal was a friend to these meetings? Yet such was the case. It must, however, be acknowledged, that he did not countenance the irregularities, but drew up a set of rules to check them. But the tendency of them was bad, and no rules could answer any good purpose. The government, therefore, ordered the suppression of them. A particular mandate to that purpose was sent to the Archbishop, but he refused to comply with it. For his disobedience, he was suspended from the exercise of his office for six months. After the lapse of that period, the government offered to restore him upon a proper submission. He made a submission, but it was not deemed satisfactory. The suspension was, therefore, continued. How long he remained in this state, I cannot learn; but at length, meeting the wishes of government, he was restored to the exercise of his episcopal function.

According to Collier,[g] it was *before* the Archbishop's jurisdiction was restored, that his Vicar-General, Dr. Aubrey, granted a preaching license to John Morrison; and if it were, Grindal did by his Vicar what he had no right to do; that is, he exercised his function while under suspension.

From this statement, which I believe is correct, it appears that the Archbishop was somewhat fanatically inclined; that he was, in some degree, lax in his discipline; and that he does not appear to have had those views of the Christian Church that the reformers had, when they compiled the ordination offices.

But what shows in a still clearer point of light the irregularity

e *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 571. f Vol. II. p. 553.
g *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 579.

of Grindal's conduct, is, that by the act under consideration, he went directly counter to the principles of the Church over which he presided; for, in the preface to the ordinal, it is expressly said, as has been already noticed, that there are three orders of apostolic institution—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; and that none shall be esteemed lawful ministers who have not been episcopally ordained, or consecrated. What now shall we think of a man who could thus fly in the face of his own Church, deliberately violate what he had solemnly engaged to maintain, and obstinately persist in disobedience to the government, when, upon a full conviction of the mischievous consequences of *prophesying*, it had ordered him to suppress such meetings? It will be of no consequence to say, that he was a conscientious, good man, and that whatever he did, was done upon principle. That is nothing at all to the purpose. A man's conviction of the rectitude of his intention, was never considered by any man in his senses as a test of truth. For any thing that appears to the contrary, Guy Faux, when he was about to blow up King, Lords, and Commons, was conscientiously devoted to that diabolical work; and our SAVIOUR himself tells his Apostles, that they would be persecuted to death, by those who would think that they were doing GOD service by shedding their blood. The utmost, then, that can be said for Grindal is, that his acting from conscience might palliate his erroneous conduct, but it can never justify it.

There is, I think, no doubt that the Archbishop was a well-meaning man. In this respect, I do not mean to lessen his character in the smallest degree. But "all is not wise that wise men say, nor good that good men do," He was generally charged with remissness, with a fondness for the Calvinistic scheme, and with over-indulging delinquents. But, in my opinion, the greatest blot upon his character is, his violation of the principles and the laws of the Church over which he presided. With this declaration before him, that none are lawful Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, without episcopal ordination, he certainly strained his prerogative, and the license which was granted, was, in law, good for nothing. The words of the license seem to me to imply a consciousness in him, that the business was not legal. The words I mean are, "As far as lies in us, and we can lawfully do it, and as far as the laws of the kingdom suffer us." But if this be the usual form, even in cases which admit of no doubt, then I acknowledge this observation has not the least force.

There is another observation that I would make before I quit this point. It is not clear *how* Morrison was ordained. There was reformation upon reformation in the Church of Scotland. The procedure in that country was very different from that of England. In the latter, the Bishops and clergy conducted the reformation calmly and deliberately; examining Scripture, and the primitive writers, with the utmost care and attention. In the former, the Bishops and Clergy generally did not reform,

and the reformation, in consequence, was conducted, chiefly, by the laity. No one could be at a loss to determine what sort of reformation it would turn out. Riot, confusion, abuse of the Catholics, demolition of venerable edifices that had been erected for ages, destruction of private property, and every species of violence were the consequences. But what particularly respects my purpose, the regimen of the primitive Church was not strictly regarded. There was, however, such a sense of the antiquity and propriety of episcopal government, that something like it was established. Had the Bishops reformed, no doubt, episcopacy would have been established. But as the Bishops still held the sees, Superintendents were appointed, who exercised episcopal jurisdiction; but, unfortunately, they were not consecrated by Bishops. The principle of *parity* does not appear to have been thought of among the *first* Scotch reformers; yet they do not appear to have had a correct notion of the ground and nature of episcopacy. I cannot suppose that it was under this scheme of *superintendency*, that Morrison was ordained, for this plain reason—the First Book of Discipline rejected (strange as it may appear) imposition of hands in ordination; and the *license* mentions, that Morrison was ordained by imposition of hands. The Church was governed by those Superintendents till the year 1572, at which time, all the Popish Bishops being either dead or deprived, the sees were filled by officers bearing the titles of Archbishops and Bishops; the old divisions of the dioceses were restored; the patrimony of the Church was properly applied; and every Bishop had spiritual jurisdiction in his own diocese. But there was one circumstance more necessary to make this a proper episcopacy. The consecration of these Bishops was, some how or other, overlooked; and, consequently, they were not true and proper Bishops; they were no more than Superintendents, with the old titles, and with more enlarged powers. But in every other respect, the plan was coincident with true and real episcopacy.[h]

This plan of government continued till the year 1580, when Presbyterianism, sincere and genuine, was established by means of the incessant and vigorous measures, and the subtle arts and intrigues of Melville and his party. It is highly probable that Morrison was ordained by one of those Bishops; for his license from Grindal was dated but two years after the abolition of this species of episcopacy. It is true, this would not be episcopal ordination, according to the principles of the Church of England, and of the primitive Church; but Grindal was not, it is evident, so strict as the Church to which he belonged, and from whose principles, every one will allow, he ought not to have departed.

The inference which may be drawn from this irregularity of

h See SKINNER's *Eccles. Hist. of Scotland*, Vol. II. p. 204, 205. This author, not long deceased, was the father of the present Bishop Skinner, the pious and venerable *Primus* of the Scotch Episcopal Church.

Grindal's, is not of the least consequence to you in any point of view whatever. You must show that it affords a presumption, that the Church of England does not place episcopacy upon the ground of *divine right;* but I am well satisfied that you will not exercise your ingenuity upon that point. If the irregularity of Grindal affords a presumption, that the Church of England does not consider episcopal ordination necessary, then it follows, that the instances given by Dr. Chandler, and lately by Dr. Hobart, of men's holding livings in the diocese of Bangor, who had never received *any* orders, affords a presumption, that she does not consider orders at all necessary to constitute a man a minister of CHRIST. If one instance of a license having been granted to a Presbyterian minister, affords you any room for exultation, certainly, several instances of mere laymen's having been licensed to hold livings, affords the fanatic, at least as much room for exulting in the inference, that the Church of England considers orders of no manner of consequence. Now, Sir, do be candid, and allow the latter to be as good reasoning as the former.

It is scarcely possible for *us* to form any thing like an adequate conception of the difficulties with which the Church had to contend in the reign of Elizabeth. Harassed on the one hand by the Puritans, and on the other by the Papists, she had to wink at several things which were inconsistent with her principles and usages. Her most formidable enemies being the Papists, and the whole Protestant interest depending so much upon her maintaining her ground, her clergy, while they maintained the apostolical institution of episcopacy, were, at the same time, very cautious of explicitly inferring from it, the invalidity of Presbyterian ordination. They wanted the aid of the Puritans, and of the foreign reformed, against the common enemy; and they would have had no reason to expect that, had they expressly asserted that Presbyterian orders in all cases are invalid. Hence arose the *salvo* of a case of necessity, and the distinction between apostolical and divine institution; and, upon one or other of these principles, I have no doubt that Grindal acted.

I have taken up more time with this article than it really deserves. It must be a desperate cause indeed that needs such support; and the urging of this case, taking all the circumstances I have mentioned into the account, is peculiarly ridiculous. The irregular conduct of Grindal is brought to prove the Presbyterianism of the Reformers who lived thirty years before this event, and who had declared to all the world, in the most explicit manner, that in the primitive Church there were three orders, and that none should be considered as lawful ministers of the Church of England, who had not been episcopally ordained. The conduct of a man who had deliberately subscribed to the principles of his Church, both as to doctrine and regimen; and who had directly contradicted those principles, is produced as a proof that they are Presbyterian. Can any thing be more

preposterous? Surely, Sir, you cannot be in earnest. Suppose I were to quote you as denying the doctrine of ministerial succession, would it be any kind of proof that your Confession of Faith does not maintain that doctrine? And of what weight would your belief be in opposition to the standard of your own Church? Just nothing at all. Nothing can be more fallacious, nothing more insidious than this procedure. Is there any Church upon earth, every individual of whose ministers perfectly accords with her standards in principle? I will venture to assert that there is not. Away then with such an improper mode of discussing the subject. Its obvious design is *ad captandum vulgus*, [to catch the crowd.] When a doctrine cannot be proved by Scripture, or reason; when a fact cannot be substantiated by proper and sufficient evidence, then A. B. and C. are introduced to prove it. Men of sense and learning ought not to descend so low as this.

Another of your arguments to prove that the Church of England does not place episcopacy upon the ground of divine right, so far as to annul ordination by Presbyters, is, that the 55th canon requires the clergy to "pray for the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland, as parts of CHRIST's holy catholic Church, which is dispersed throughout the world."

This, Sir, is not the point in dispute between us. The question is not, whether the Church of England declares ordination by Presbyters invalid; but whether she places episcopacy upon the ground of divine right? I have proved from the preface to the Ordinal, and from the declaration of the Church, that none will be considered by her lawful Bishops, Priests and Deacons, who are not episcopally ordained; and from the prayers in the Ordination Offices, that she maintains the divine right of episcopacy. This is all I feel any concern about; the consequence of this principle is another question, which I am not called upon at present to discuss.

There is, Sir, something very unfair in your management of this subject. The question between us simply is, What is the government of the Christian Church by apostolical and divine appointment? *We* say it is episcopal; you say it is presbyterian. To prove that you are right you quote some Episcopalians, who allow, under certain circumstances, the validity of your orders. And although you do not expressly draw the inference, yet you evidently produce these quotations to impress upon the minds of your readers this position, that episcopacy is not a divine institution, because some Episcopalians who maintain that it is, at the same time do not carry the principle so far as to unchurch Presbyterians. This, Sir, is not a proper view of the subject. Reason as much as you please against the ground upon which we place our regimen; marshal, if you can find them, fifty Episcopalians, who assert, in opposition to the principles of their own Church, that episcopacy is a human institution; but do not fly off to another question, viz. What is

the necessary consequence of believing episcopacy to be of divine institution? This is not the question we are discussing. Men frequently differ about the consequences of principles. Consequences are made out by reasoning; and men reason very differently. How strikingly is this the case with Calvinists! Some of them admit without any scruple, all the consequences with which their principles are charged; others reject these consequences, and contend that they do not flow from the doctrines of Calvin. Thus also the Westminster divines, in their disputes with the Independents, deny the validity of ordination by laymen, and strenuously maintain the necessity of unbroken succession; yet there are some Presbyterian ministers, who, while they assert the divine institution of a ministry, do not carry the principle so far as to invalidate lay ordination. Just so it is with some Episcopalians. They say that maintaining the divine institution of episcopacy does not invalidate presbyterian ordination. Whether those Presbyterians and Episcopalians are consistent, is another question.

It may be further observed, that those who assert the divine institution of episcopacy, must necessarily be supposed to maintain, that a Church which rejects episcopacy, or cannot possibly obtain it, (which is placing it upon the most favourable ground) is *quoad hoc* [in that particular] imperfect and unsound. For if episcopacy rests upon divine institution, then a Presbyterian Church, which wants episcopacy, wants a divine institution; and, consequently, in a very important point, must be defective. And whether a conscientious man, convinced of this, can derive any comfort from the concession, that this principle does not go so far as totally to *unchurch;* or whether he can continue a member of such a Church consistently with the duty of being a member of a complete, sound, and scriptural Church, is a question of great importance, and, therefore, deserves the attention of every serious Christian.

The next observation which you make, in the pursuit of your object, is the following: 'Dr. Warner, a learned episcopal historian, declares, that Archbishop Bancroft was the *first* man in the Church of England, who preached up the divine right of episcopacy. The same is asserted by many other episcopal writers; and this passage from Warner is quoted with approbation by Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, in his *Case of the Episcopal Churches*, in showing that the doctrine which founds episcopacy on *divine right* has never been embraced by the great body of the most esteemed divines of the Church of England.'

Here, Sir, you have shifted your ground again. The fifty-fifth Canon has been just quoted to prove that those who had high notions of episcopacy, or, in other words, maintained its divine origin, did not, however, carry that principle so far as to unchurch Presbyterians. This, I have observed, is not the question in the present dispute. You *now* come to the precise point

of debate; and upon this point, if I do not deceive myself, you will be easily vanquished.

You assert, Sir, after Dr. Warner, that 'Bancroft was the first man who preached upon the divine right of episcopacy.' How any man with the Ordinal and Ordination Offices before him can venture this assertion, is beyond my comprehension. I have shown, in my view of the matter, beyond the possibility of refutation, that the Ordinal and Offices of ordination declare episcopacy to be a divine institution. This doctrine was then made by the reformers, a standard principle of the Church of England. After this, the first defence of episcopacy upon the ground of divine right, was by Whitgift, and not by Bancroft. But this is really of no importance. It was needless to write an elaborate defence of episcopacy, till it was attacked. The first attack made upon it was by Cartwright and his associates, in the year 1572, twenty-four years after the Reformation. They published a book entitled, *An Admonition to the Parliament;* the design of which was to subvert the government of Bishops. An answer was given to this book by Dr. Whitgift, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Strype says of this book, that "it contained a very learned and satisfactory vindication of the Church of England, and especially of the government of it by Bishops."[i] Some years afterwards, Sir F. Knollys, a great Puritan, complains of Whitgift, that in this book he "had claimed, in the right of Bishops, a superiority belonging to them over all the inferior clergy from GOD's own ordinance."[k] In 1593 Whitgift, when promoted to the see of Canterbury, wrote a letter to Beza, in which he expostulates with him for intermeddling in the dispute between the Church and the Puritans. In that letter he says, "We make no doubt but that the episcopal degree, which we bear, is an institution apostolic and divine; and so hath always been held by a continual course of times, from the Apostles to this very age of ours." Again: "You may remember, learned Sir, the beginnings of that episcopacy, which you make to be only of human institution, are referred by the fathers, with one mouth, to the Apostles, as the authors thereof; and that the Bishops were appointed as successors of the Apostles; especially in certain points of their function. And what Aaron was to his sons, and to the Levites, this the Bishops were to the Priests and Deacons; and so esteemed of the fathers to be by divine institution."[l]

It is now, Sir, proved incontrovertibly, that your guide, Dr. Warner, was in an error, when he asserted that "Bancroft was the first that preached up the divine right of episcopacy." It was preached by the Reformers, and made by them a fixed principle of the Church; and as soon as the Church was attacked by the Puritans, it was defended first by Whitgift, and afterwards by Bancroft and others, upon the ground of divine right.

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i *Life of Whitgift*, p. 33. k Ibid. p. 342. l Ibid. p. 460.

You next, Sir, tell us a story of Dr. Holland's checking Laud, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, for asserting, in a public disputation, the divine right of episcopacy. What Dr. Holland thought, is of no more consequence than what *you*, or *I* think. We ought not to employ ourselves in collecting opinions; that is a very irksome, and, after all, a very useless employment. Our business is to exhibit all the evidence that can be produced *for* or *against* episcopacy. This is all that the eye of philosophy looks for; any thing further may be calculated to catch the ignorant; but can never have the least weight with a logical inquirer after truth.

You go on. 'The reformation in Scotland commenced in the year 1560. The constitution of that Church was formed, as every one knows, on the Presbyterian plan.' Excuse me, Sir; every one does not know that to have been the case. On the contrary, every one who is acquainted with the history of that period, knows that the Church of Scotland was not settled upon that plan. It is an essential principle of Presbyterianism, that CHRIST founded the ministry upon the ground of *parity;* consequently, if this were true, parity of ministers must be a divine institution. But this principle was rejected by the reformers of the Church of Scotland; and there cannot be any doubt, that episcopacy would have been established, had the Bishops reformed. There was also another circumstance, which contributed much to prevent the establishment of that regimen. By the constitution of the kingdom, the Bishops made one of the three estates of the realm; it was, therefore, supposed that the Popish Bishops could not be legally dispossessed. They were, therefore, left in their sees, with all their revenues, and all their temporal powers. But this notwithstanding, Protestant Bishops might have been consecrated; for it is not necessary that Bishops should have temporal jurisdiction, and great revenues. This unhappy error contributed much to prevent the establishment of a proper episcopacy. But still *parity* was disclaimed, and Superintendents, with episcopal jurisdiction, were established. Bishop Sage, in his *Presbytery Untwisted*, names thirty points of superiority, which the Superintendents had over the parish ministers. In jurisdiction, they had all the powers of Bishops, and there was nothing wanting but consecration to have made them such. This, Sir, was the plan of the reformation of the Church of Scotland, and not the Presbyterian plan, as you assert; and with which (strange it is!) you suppose every one to be acquainted.[m]

You go on, Sir, in one continued strain of error. You say, 'This form' (the Presbyterian) 'was retained until the year 1610, when prelacy was violently introduced against the sense of the nation.'

I have shown that the Church of Scotland was not formed

m See SAGE, COLLIER, SPOTSWOOD, SKINNER, and BURNET.

upon the principle of *parity*, but of *imparity;* and, consequently, Presbyterianism, which was not introduced in 1560, could not have been retained till 1610. The truth is, that it had no existence till 1580, twenty years after the reformation. And before presbyterian government was established, a still nearer approach to episcopacy took place in the year 1572. The plan of Superintendents was laid aside; clergymen, with the old titles of Archbishops and Bishops were appointed; they were put in possession of the revenues of the sees, restored to the ancient jurisdiction, and made, as formerly, the third estate of the realm; and this government (although not strictly episcopal, because the Bishops were not consecrated) continued till the year 1584.[n]—Unaccountable, indeed, Sir, it is, that you should not be acquainted with these notorious facts.

A third error is contained in the following words. 'In that year, (1610,) Spotswood, Lamb, and Hamilton, were consecrated Bishops in London, by some of the English prelates; and, on their return home, they imparted the episcopal dignity to a number of others. As they had been Presbyters before this time, Archbishop Bancroft proceeded to their consecration as Bishops, without requiring them to be previously re-ordained as Priests; expressly delivering it as his opinion, that their former Presbyterian ordination was valid.'

Surely, Sir, you must know that there is a very different account given of this matter by Heylin, Collier, and Grey. Bancroft, according them, reasoned in a very different manner. He said, "that there was no necessity for the Scotch Bishops passing through the intermediate orders of Deacon and Priest; for that the episcopal character might be fully conveyed at a single consecration;"[o] and for this he cited two precedents in the ancient Church. The examples were Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople.

This is a much better account of the transaction than you have given. You acknowledge that Bancroft placed episcopacy upon the ground of divine right; we may, therefore, very reasonably suppose, that he would act upon a principle that is more consonant to that belief, than the one you imagine he acted upon. The principle, that the highest order necessarily comprehends the powers of the inferior orders, is perfectly correct, and may, therefore, in uncommon cases, be admitted; although, in the ordinary course of things, it will be found expedient to proceed in a different manner.

I really, Sir, am heartily tired of examining your statements. Some of them are so totally different from the facts, and others are placed in so unfair a point of view, that I believe our readers will think me fairly discharged from noticing every minute particular of this nature. But allowing that you have fairly repre-

n SAGE'S *Presbytery Untwisted*, p. 270, and COLLIER'S *Eccles. Hist.*, Vol. II. p. 534.

o COLLIER'S *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 702.

sented the assertions of some Episcopalians, and of Luther and Calvin, and others, pray, Sir, to what does it amount? Is truth to be tried by the opinions of a few great men? Does reason say it ought to be? Certainly not. We must examine it by its proper evidence; and when it is established by that evidence, it matters not how many names can be brought against it. Were I disputing with you upon what are called the Calvinistic doctrines, I suspect it would excite in you some degree of indignation, were I to give you a long list of Presbyterian divines who have written against those doctrines. You would, I believe, cut the matter short, and tell me, at once, that the truth of the Calvinistic doctrines is not to be tried in that manner, but by reason and Scripture; and if they can be established upon these grounds, it matters not how many ministers of a Calvinistic Church are opposed to them. This would be perfectly correct, and no reasonable reply could be made to it.

This observation may be applied with the strictest propriety to the present discussion. If I have proved from Scripture and the ancients, that episcopacy is a divine institution, then the matter is settled; and if you could produce fifty times as many names as you have produced, it would be to no purpose, but to mislead the unthinking. The argument (if it be not a prostitution of language to use the word in this case) is, however, of a popular kind, and admirably adapted to make an impression upon those who know not the nature of evidence, and, consequently, can have no fixed principles of reasoning.

But if I *have not* established diocesan episcopacy upon the grounds of Scripture and antiquity, my showing that you have misrepresented episcopal writers, is nothing at all to the purpose. In the eye of a philosopher, the controversy was ended with the testimony of Scripture, interpreted by the practice of the primitive Church. And the question concerning the principles of the Church of England, and of her reformers, was closed with the evidence produced to prove that they are episcopal. What a few individuals then may say or think, is altogether irrelevant to the point in dispute. Notwithstanding this cannot be denied, yet I shall consider, in my next letter, what you call the concessions of Episcopalians upon the subject of episcopacy.

It is also, I conceive, needless for me to take a particular view of the sentiments of Luther, and Calvin, and Beza, and other reformers; *that* has been sufficiently done by Durell, and many others since his day, and lately by Dr. Hobart. It is, I conceive, beyond reasonable controversy, that Calvin, at first, did plead necessity for his departure from episcopal government; and that he did acknowledge it to have been the government of all the Churches upon earth, from the times of the Apostles, for fifteen hundred years together.[p] "But his extraordinary opinion of

p *Institut.* Lib. IV. chap. iv. sect. 2.

episcopacy will farther appear in a letter which he and Bullinger, and other learned men beyond sea, wrote in 1549 to Edward the Sixth, offering to make him their defender, and to have Bishops in their Churches for better unity and concord amongst them, as appears from Strype's memorial of Archbishop Cranmer, as likewise from a writing of Archbishop Abbot's, found among the manuscripts of Archbishop Usher."[q] Unfortunately, the letter fell into the hands of the Popish Bishops, Gardiner and Bonner, who, in the names of the reformers, returned a surly answer to it. "From that time," says Strype, "John Calvin and the Church of England were at variance in several points, which otherwise, through GOD's mercy, had been qualified, if those papers of his proposals had been discovered unto the Queen's majesty during John Calvin's life. But being not discovered until, or about the sixth year of her Majesty's reign, her Majesty much lamented they were not found sooner; which she expressed before her council, in the presence of her great friends, Sir Henry Sidney and Sir William Cecil."[r] Had it not been for this unfortunate accident, in all probability, the whole reformed Church would have been episcopal; and, in consequence, the animosity, and mischief which resulted from ministerial parity, have been prevented.

As to Luther, "he professes, that if the Popish Bishops would cease to persecute the Gospel," he and those of his communion, "would acknowledge them as their fathers, and willingly obey their authority, which (says he) *we find supported by the word of* GOD." Consequently, in his and their opinion, episcopacy was an apostolic institution. And Melancthon, one of the greatest characters among the reformed, "lays the blame on the cruelty of the Popish Bishops, that that canonical polity was destroyed, which (saith he) *we so earnestly desired to preserve;*" and bids the Papists consider "what account they will render to GOD for thus scattering his Church."[s]

As to the Church of Holland, it is well known that her divines also pleaded necessity for their departure from episcopacy. Bogerman, the President of the Synod of Dort, lamented to the British Bishops who attended that assembly, the unhappy situation of their Church from a want of Bishops; *Nobis non licet esse tam beatis*, [we are not permitted to be so happy,] was his solemn declaration.

It is needless to enter into a more minute detail of the testimonies which the foreign reformers have left upon record, in favour of the excellency, expediency, and apostolical institution of episcopacy. Enough has been done to show, upon a general view, that the regimen of the Church of England was formed upon a principle of imparity by apostolic institution; of the Church of Scotland, and the Lutheran Churches in Germany, upon the

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q CHANDLER'S *Appeal defended*, p. 238. r STRYPE'S *Life of Parker*, p. 70.
s CHANDLER'S *Appeal defended*, p. 239.

same principle, but upon the ground of expediency; of the Church of Sweden and Denmark, upon the principle of apostolical imparity; and that the Churches of Geneva and Holland wished for episcopacy, and plead necessity for their departure from it. In a short time, however, they found it more consistent, and more convenient to change their ground; and to justify, by the best reasons which they could invent, what at first they very modestly excused.

Before I close this letter, I shall make one or two observations.

1. It appears from history, that every Church upon earth, before the reformation, was episcopal; and that there were no disputes about ecclesiastical regimen before that period; for the notion started by some of the schoolmen, that Bishops are not a superior order, but a superior degree of the priesthood, cannot be called a dispute about the origin of episcopacy. It must, therefore, strike every reflecting mind as a most wonderful thing, that for fifteen hundred years there should have been no diversity of opinion upon the subject of episcopacy, if *parity*, according to some modern Christians, had been established by the Apostles; or if, according to others, they had left the government of the Church to human arrangement. There is, perhaps, nothing about which men differ more than about forms of government. In the very nature of things, it must be so. It may, therefore, I think, be fairly asserted, that it was morally impossible for the whole Christian world to have agreed in the episcopal form of government, if it had been left to men to determine for themselves what form they would adopt. Upon no principle, it appears to me, could such uniformity prevail, but upon this—that the episcopal government was established by apostolic authority; and that, therefore, Christians did not think themselves at liberty to alter it.

The next observation that I would make, is this—that although some of the reformed, either from an unhappy necessity, or from an imperfect view of the evidence by which episcopacy is supported, or from that pernicious principle, that the government of the Church ought to be accommodated to the government of the state, did depart from the primitive regimen; yet, at this day, nine tenths of the Christian world are episcopal. This, I presume, no one will controvert. Now, although I should not choose to assert, without any qualification, that *universality* of belief and practice in this case is a sufficient proof of the apostolic origin of episcopacy; yet, I *do* assert, that when this universality can be traced up to the apostolic age, it is a clear and decisive proof of the divine source of this mode of government. Upon this argument I shall say no more at present, as I purpose to exhibit it, in a future letter, in every point of view in which I am able to place it. I have just introduced the observation here to show, that the few deviations from episcopal regimen, which unhappily occurred at the reformation, are but as the dust upon the balance; and that if we *must* count numbers, this mode of trial, as well as every other, is decidedly in our favour.

LETTER XVI.

REV. SIR:

To notice all the intimations, inferences, and positive, unfounded assertions in your 'letters,' would necessarily extend this discussion to an intolerable length. I shall, therefore, bring to view only those assertions, which are best calculated to mislead the unlearned and the unwary.

What further strikes me as worthy of notice in your sixth letter is, first, your assertion, that the Church of Sweden, although she has officers with the title of Bishops, yet those Bishops are no more than Superintendents, such as govern the Lutheran Churches in Germany.

In answer to this, I have nothing more to do than to refer you to your own quotation from Mosheim. He is undoubtedly good authority upon this point. He says, "The internal government of the Lutheran Church seems equally removed from episcopacy on the one hand, and from Presbyterianism on the other, *if we except the kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark*, which retain the form of ecclesiastical government that preceded the reformation, purged indeed from the superstitions and abuses that render it so odious."

The form of government preceding the reformation, was undoubtedly episcopal; and this form, Mosheim says, was retained; consequently, the Swedish Church is strictly episcopal. For this reason, a Presbyter of that Church would not be re-ordained by our Bishops; while a Minister of the Lutheran Church in Germany, or in this country, *would* be re-ordained; because the Lutherans, both here and there, have not Bishops, but Superintendents.

You observe, Sir, that 'several of the foregoing remarks apply to the United Brethren, or Moravians. They, indeed, have Bishops in their Churches, but explicitly renounce all claim of *divine right* for their system.' They have, then, it seems, by your own acknowledgment, a valid episcopacy. In this, you are undoubtedly correct. Archbishop Potter, when the Moravians first appeared in England, particularly examined their episcopacy, and pronounced it apostolical. Now, this is their own opinion of it, as well as the opinion of the English divines. If, then, in their own opinion, it is founded upon apostolical institution, sanctioned by the HOLY GHOST, it must necessarily be of divine appointment; and consequently, as the power of ordaining was from the beginning attached to the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops, wherever that order is wanting, the proper ordaining officer is wanting. This being the case, if they do not claim a *divine right* for their episcopacy, and do not re-ordain those that were ordained by Presbyters, it appears to me, that they act very inconsistently. For their episcopacy

is either a divine, or a human institution; there can be no medium. If a *human*, then it is not the primitive, apostolical episcopacy. If a *divine* institution, then it cannot admit ordination by mere Presbyters. I appeal to yourself, Sir, and to Dr. Mason, and Mr. M'Leod, whether, if episcopacy be a divine institution, and the power of ordaining be attached to Bishops, and to them only, it is not inconsistent to admit ordination by Presbyters? I am sure your two coadjutors argue precisely in the same manner, with respect to presbyterian ordination; and, I think, that it necessarily results from several of your own positions. You would all condemn ordination by lay-hands, and would not suffer a man ordained in that manner to officiate among you. But why, Sir, do you act thus? Can you produce from Scripture a passage which condemns lay-ordination? Or can you produce an express precept for ordination by Presbyters? I am certain, that you would all answer, We cannot; but we can produce what is equivalent; that is, apostolical practice; and as the Apostles acted under the influence of the HOLY GHOST, in settling the constitution of the Christian Church, their practice is a sure guide and warrant to us. This, I am persuaded, would be the answer from you, and the other named gentlemen, and from every consistent Presbyterian. Now, this is precisely the manner in which we reason with respect to episcopacy. You cannot, therefore, find fault with us for condemning presbyterian ordination, without involving yourselves in the most palpable inconsistency. You say, lay-ordination is invalid, because there is no warrant in Scripture for it; consequently, the Moravians, and those English Episcopalians, who assert the apostolic institution of episcopacy, and yet admit, that ordination by Presbyters is valid, are grossly inconsistent with themselves. But, Sir, our Church stands clear of this inconsistency. She declares the order of Bishops to be apostolical and divine; and, therefore, requires all who have been ordained by Presbyters, to be episcopally ordained, before she admits them to minister in holy things.

Another of your witnesses is, the Methodist Church. You say, 'In order to swell the list of episcopal Churches as much as possible, the Methodist Church is frequently represented as such.' *Represented as such!* Pray, Sir, by whom? You must mean, *by us*, if you mean any thing to your purpose. Sir, it is impossible that you should be ignorant that we consider the Methodist episcopacy as good for nothing. It is impossible that you should be ignorant, that our Bishops re-ordain all that come over from them to us. Several instances have occurred in this city. If even one of their *Bishops* were to conform to our Church, he must submit to be ordained, first a Deacon, and then a Presbyter. This, Sir, you must certainly know. How is it then, that you can intimate, that we admit the Methodist episcopacy, for the sake of swelling the list of episcopal Churches? No, Sir, we not only consider them as non-episcopal; but also as the most

wanton schismatics that have ever disgraced the Christian Church. For they agree with us in all doctrinal points, they admit the validity of our episcopal orders, and they have a Liturgy, taken from ours, with no material alterations. They do not, I believe, often use it. Nor is this to be expected from a people so enthusiastic. Like the Pharisees of old, they *say*, and *do not*. They admit the propriety and expediency of a Liturgy, by establishing one; and they contradict and condemn themselves, by not using it.

You proceed, Sir, to observe of the Methodists, that 'Mr. Wesley, the venerable founder of that Church, when he undertook, a number of years ago, to digest a plan for its external organization, especially in the United States, formally avowed himself to be of the opinion with Lord Chancellor King, that Bishop and Presbyter, in the primitive Church, were the same. And in perfect conformity with this belief, he himself, being only a Presbyter in the Church of England, united with other Presbyters in ordaining Ministers for his new Church. These Presbyters ordained the first Methodist Bishops, from whom all succeeding ordinations in that body have been derived.'

All this, Sir, is perfectly correct. Mr. John Wesley *did* as you say; and that in direct opposition to his solemn subscriptions when he was ordained, to his repeated declarations through a long life, and to numerous, strong, and conclusive reasons, which he had published against separating from the Church of England. But this is not all: John Wesley, as appears from the correspondence of Dr. Coke with Bishop White, was not satisfied with himself for the step which he had taken. Doubts about the validity of the orders of his new-fangled Bishops appear to me to have troubled *his* mind, as well as *Dr. Coke's*, who was one of those Bishops. Coke, therefore, writes to Bishop White, offering to give up their spurious episcopacy, and to return to the bosom of the Church, provided the Methodists could be indulged in some of their peculiarities. But their requisitions could not be complied with, and, of course, the whole fell to the ground. This transaction was an implicit acknowledgment of the invalidity of the Methodist episcopacy.[a] Upon these facts it may be expedient to make two or three reflections.

First. The whole conduct of John Wesley, as appears from the accounts of this transaction at Bristol, given us by Coke, Whitehead, and Charles Wesley, convinces me that John Wesley, at the very time that he thus abandoned apostolic usage, was not satisfied with the correctness of his own conduct. Charles Wesley says, in his letter to Dr. Chandler, which has

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a See a pamphlet lately published by the Rev. Mr. Kewley. [Also, BISHOP WHITE'S *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States*, (published since the publication of Dr. Bowden's Letters,) in which a full, and of course authentic, account of Dr. Coke's proposition, its grounds and its results, may be found; p. 211, and Appendix, No. 21.]

been published and re-published in this country, that he was at his brother's elbow all the time, and that he did not give him the least hint of his intention. He was afraid of encountering his brother Charles' arguments against such a measure; for Charles was very primitive in his notions of episcopacy. Another circumstance which convinces me that John Wesley's mind was not quite at ease when he assumed the episcopal character, is, that he was evidently persuaded to take that very unjustifiable step by Coke, and two or three others, and that it did not originate from himself. He appears to me to have yielded rather to importunity than to conviction. A third reason is, that he was evidently ashamed of the whole business; for the pretended consecration to the episcopal office was not performed in public, but in a private room; thus realizing, as Charles Wesley says, "the Nag's-Head ordination, and robbing his friends of their boasting." The last reason for conviction is, what I have already mentioned, that he afterwards wished to retrace his steps, and to undo, as far as he could, what he had done. Taking all these circumstances together, I am satisfied, that John Wesley acted from a doubting mind, if not absolutely in contradiction to his own conviction.

But, admitting that he was really convinced by Lord King; yet, I think, that Charles Wesley's excuse for him is the best that can possibly be made—"My brother was eighty-two years of age when he took this fatal step."

The other observation that I shall make upon this rash measure is, the great danger, and mischievous consequences, of departing either from the doctrine, or discipline of the primitive Church in the purest and best ages. Trace any heresy, or any schism you please, and it will be found to be a deviation from the Church in one or the other of these respects. Christianity can admit of no improvements. It was complete the moment the canon of Scripture was closed; and those who lived in or near the apostolic age, had many advantages for understanding what were the doctrines, the constitution, and the discipline of the Christian Church, which we have not. The Holy Scriptures, expounded and elucidated by primitive and universal belief and practice, will effectually secure us from the delusions, the heresies and schisms of later ages; and if John Wesley had governed himself by this rule, instead of giving himself up to Lord King's dictates, we never should have heard of the *spurious* episcopacy of the Methodists.

I shall now, Sir, go back to the first part of your sixth 'letter,' the consideration of which I postponed, till I had taken a view of what you have said concerning the English reformers.

The first thing deserving of notice, is your adducing the Waldenses, as witnesses to Presbyterian parity. You say that they maintained that 'there ought to be no diversity of rank among Ministers of the gospel—that Bishops and Presbyters, according to the word of God, and primitive practice, were the

same order; and that their ecclesiastical organization was presbyterian in its form.'

Now, Sir, I maintain, on the contrary, that the Waldenses were episcopal, both in principle and practice. My first authority is Mosheim. He says, "The government of the Church was committed, by the Waldenses, to Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons; for they acknowledged that those three ecclesiastical orders were instituted by CHRIST himself."[b] This is a very explicit, and very strong testimony against you.

The next testimony is, perhaps, stronger than Mosheim's. It is that of Dr. Allix, who minutely examined the history of this body of Christians, and pronounced them to have been episcopal. I have not Allix's *Remarks upon the ancient Churches of Piedmont;* I must, therefore, be indebted to Dr. Chandler for what follows. The Doctor observes, that "Allix has abundantly proved, that the Waldenses always preserved, under all their persecutions and dispersions, the same form of church government, from the time of their separation from the Church of Rome, in the eleventh century; and that they distinguished their clergy into three orders—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. He proves this even from the testimonies of those enemies, who endeavoured to fix upon them the reproach of allowing the laity to preach and administer the sacraments. And he proves it more fully from their own writers."[c]

My third testimony against you, I also take from Dr. Chandler. He quotes the author of *The invalidity of the dissenting ministry*, who says, that "in 1717, a contribution was made throughout England for the Waldenses, and that, on that occasion, it clearly appeared that their Church was episcopal, like the Church of England, for which they always pray in their Liturgy."

But what settles this matter in the most satisfactory manner, is what follows. The Bohemian Church, in its preface to the book called, *Ratio Disciplinæ, Ordinisque Ecclesiastici, in Unitate Fratrum Bohemorum*, says: "And whereas the said Waldenses did affirm, that they had lawful Bishops, and a lawful *uninterrupted succession from the Apostles* unto this day; they solemnly created three of our Ministers Bishops, and conferred upon them power to ordain Ministers."[d] And, in conformity with this, Commenius, the historian of the Bohemians, says: "The Protestants of Bohemia, who were apprehensive that ordinations, in which Presbyters, and not a Bishop, should create another Presbyter, would not be lawful; and were in doubt how they should be able to maintain such an ordination, either to others when they opposed, or to their own people when they questioned it—sent deputies to the remains of the ancient Waldenses, upon the confines of Moravia and Austria, by whose Bishops these deputies were consecrated to the episcopal office, which they have ever since transmitted to their successors."[e]

b *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 126. c *Appeal defended*, p. 91, 92.
d Ibid. p. 69. e *Comm. in Frat. Bohem.* as quoted by Bishop ELLYS.

From these accounts it appears beyond contradiction, that the Waldenses had *diocesan*, and not *presbyterian* Bishops, as you assert—that they consecrated three Presbyters to the episcopal office, who were sent by the Bohemians for that purpose—and that they were persuaded that they had an *uninterrupted succession* of Bishops from the Apostles.

Of what consequence is it now, Sir, to inform us, that Eneas Sylvius, (afterwards Pope Pius the Second,) and the Monk, Walsingham, and one or two more of the Popish enemies of the Waldenses, charged them with maintaining, that Bishop and Presbyter were only different names for the same officer? They charged them, also, with allowing laymen to preach and administer the sacraments. They were loaded with every kind of reproach, and destroyed with every species of cruelty. What such men said of them has no weight, when set in opposition to the respectable authorities which I have quoted.

Your next witness in favour of Presbyterian parity, is John Wickliffe, Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford.

It is not, Sir, an easy matter, whatever you may think, to determine what Wickliffe's principles were. Thus far, I believe, we may go with safety: He opposed the Pope's supremacy, transubstantiation, the worship of images, the invocation of saints, and some minor points. But scriptural and rational as he was with regard to these subjects, yet he maintained some very shocking doctrines. Collier has given us a view of them, as he took them from Waldensis and Harpsfield. These men, to be sure, were Wickliffe's enemies, and, therefore, we ought not to place implicit confidence in them. But if we receive their testimonies with respect to him in some particulars, we must in all, unless we can find impartial historians, who contradict these men upon the offensive tenets with which they charge Wickliffe. I will exhibit a few of those tenets as I find them in Collier.[f]

1st. Wickliffe maintains a stoical fate, and makes all things proceed from absolute necessity. God, says he, forcibly determines all creatures to their respective actions. Every one that will be damned, is a devil like Judas. Judas was chosen by our Saviour's humanity. This, says Harpsfield, makes men fiends by predestination, and is a more horrible doctrine than that of the Manichæans, who made man the author of his own miscarriage, and did not fetch the principal of evil from God Almighty.

2d. Wickliffe is charged with denying infant baptism, and with giving a most absurd interpretation of our Saviour's declaration, that, *except a man be born of water and of the* Spirit, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of* God. He affirms, that by these words, we are to understand only the water which flowed from our Saviour's side, in conjunction with the baptism of the Spirit.

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f *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 584, 585, 586.

3d. He disallows *imposition of hands in ordination*, and all other ceremonies of an outward calling. He is likewise said to have given women the privilege of the priesthood and pulpit, and to allow Priests to ordain to their own order.

4th. Wickliffe is charged with several heterodoxies relating to the attributes and operations of the ALMIGHTY. As that, GOD always acts to the extent of his power, and can do nothing more nor otherwise, than what he does: That he could not alter the state of the creation, the order of things, or make the world greater or less than it is: That the First Cause is limited in the creation of human souls, and cannot exceed such a fixed and determined number, nor annihilate any thing.

5th. Several errors relating to our SAVIOUR are ascribed to him; as that our SAVIOUR had three natures in a separate sense; whereas, the Scriptures inform us, that he consists only of two, the human and divine.

Lastly. He is charged with denying that a Bishop is superior to a Priest.

These, Sir, are but a few of Wickliffe's heterodoxies, as they are given us by Collier.[g] Now, you may either receive all, or reject all. Take Wickliffe, with some important truths, and many gross errors, and what does it all amount to? Precisely to this: That it was wasting time and paper to have noticed him. But as you have brought him to view, it was expedient for me to show, that Wickliffe's opinion, with respect to episcopacy, is of no more consequence than George Fox's, with respect to a ministry in any degree, or under any form.

You go on, Sir, in the same irrelevant and useless manner. You inform us, that the renowned martyrs, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, who laid down their lives for the truth, a little after the time of Wickliffe, embraced the greater part, if not all the opinions of the English reformer, and especially his doctrine concerning the parity of Christian Ministers. You then quote Eneas Sylvius to prove this, but do not let us know in what part of his works we are to look for the quotation; and you say, that this account is confirmed by Thuanus, without any reference to page or volume.

Were I to pass over the whole of this, it would be treating the matter as it deserves. When a writer gives us no particular reference, his assertion is not entitled to any notice. But waving this, I observe—

First, That Collier, in the view he gives us of John Huss' and Jerome's sentiments, does not say a word of their notions of ecclesiastical government. This, indeed, taken alone, does not amount to much. But taken in connexion with what follows, it has some weight.

In the second place, Mosheim does not say that John Huss maintained the principle of ministerial parity. And Mosheim's

g See also MOSHEIM, *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 333.

translator, Dr. Maclaine, asserts, that he adopted the opinions of Wickliffe only "in relation to the *papal* hierarchy, the despotism of the court of Rome, and the corruption of the clergy; for in other respects, it is certain that he adhered to the most superstitious doctrines of the Church, as appears by two sermons he had prepared for the council of Constance."[h]

It cannot, therefore, be deemed of any consequence, that Eneas Sylvius (admitting the correctness of your quotation) charges John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, with maintaining the principle of ministerial *parity*.

Although I do not think it of the least moment what Sylvius says upon this point, yet I wish to have access to his works, to see with my own eyes, what he asserts with respect to these men, and the Waldenses. But I have not his writings, nor do I know who has. They are, I find, in the library of Philadelphia; as appears from some notes in my possession, made upon your book by a sensible and candid clergyman of that city. "As Dr. Miller (says he) quotes Thuanus, Eneas Sylvius, and Walsingham, to prove that the Bishops of the Waldenses were mere Presbyters, I this day [July 27th] looked into these authors, in the library; but in the places to which the indexes refer, could find nothing to the purpose. In Thuanus, there is a passage, which I find translated in Bishop Newton; but this cannot serve Dr. Miller's turn. Eneas Sylvius mentions them cursorily, when he introduces his account of John Huss. But the intemperate manner in which he speaks of both John Huss and the Waldenses, would at least invalidate what is brought from him, *if it be there*, which *I doubt*. In Walsingham I could find nothing; and, indeed, I should lay little stress on any thing from this monkish writer."

"When I looked on Bishop Newton's, and at Dr. *Mosheim's* representations of the Waldenses, and at the respectable, early testimonies, so far back as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which they refer to in their notes, I am surprised at Dr. Miller's bringing against them the testimony of Walsingham and Sylvius, who lived in the fifteenth, and that of Thuanus, who lived in the sixteenth century; even supposing their testimony to be as stated; of which, to say the least, *I have great doubts*." Thus writes a man, who would not wilfully misrepresent any thing.

You next quote a passage from Tyndal, who was a canon of Oxford, in the reign of Henry the eighth. But I can see nothing in the quotation to which I cannot very readily subscribe. "All that were called Elders (or Priests, if they so will) were called Bishops also, though they have now divided the names." This is very correct. Presbyters were undoubtedly called Bishops at first, but at the beginning of the second century, those who succeeded to the apostolical pre-eminence, had the title of Bishop appropriated to them.

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h MOSHEIM's *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 410.

This Tyndal, according to Collier,[i] was very heterodox, upon both Popish and Protestant principles. To mention but one particular: He maintained that all Christians were priests, and denied the necessity of any distinct order. Such a man's ideas of ecclesiastical regimen, can be of no consequence, one way or the other.

Lambert's testimony is also of the same import with that of Tyndal's. He certainly did not mean to exclude the Apostles from their rank in the Church; and then there were three orders, Apostles, Presbyters or Bishops, and Deacons. The commnnity of names is nothing at all to the purpose, as has been proved, almost to a demonstration.

I have now, Sir, to examine what you are pleased to call the 'concessions of Episcopalians.'

Before you come to the point, you prudently make the following observations: 'When I exhibit Episcopal divines as making concessions in favour of our doctrine, none, certainly, will understand me as meaning to assert, that they were Presbyterians in principle. So far from this, the chief value of their concessions consists in being made by decided friends of episcopacy. Neither will you understand me to assert, that none of these writers say any thing, in other parts of their works, inconsistent with these concessions. It is enough for me to know what language they employed, *when they undertook professedly to state their opinions on the subject before us.*'[k]

It appears from this quotation that you do not bring to view the writers named in your 'Letter,' for the purpose of showing that they were Presbyterians in principle. A Presbyterian is one who believes that the Apostles, acting by divine direction, left the Ministers of the Church in a state of perfect equality. You acquit the authors quoted from maintaining this principle. Well then, what *did* they maintain? That the Apostles, directed by the HOLY GHOST, left the Church under no particular form of government? That opinion is absurd; for *some* form every *society* must have; and the scriptures declare the Church to be a *society;* and it is evident to common sense that it is. Now, if those authors did not believe the Church to have been committed to Ministers acting upon a footing of equality, then they must have believed that the Apostles established the ministry upon a principle of *imparity;* and this is true and proper episcopacy.

2. If the Episcopalians whom you quote believed that *imparity* among the Ministers of the Gospel was established by the Apostles, then they must have believed that the Apostles acted either under the direction of the HOLY GHOST, or that they acted from their own private judgment. If they, under the direction of the HOLY GHOST, established *imparity*, then *imparity* is a divine institution. If so, then the authority of

i *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 72.

k Letter VII. p. 246, 247.

the HOLY GHOST, by which *imparity* was established, is necessary to abolish it: for it is an acknowledged principle, in both human and divine governments, that no less power than that which institutes, can abrogate. Consequently, if those Episcopalians, who assert that episcopacy was established by the Apostles, acting under the direction of the HOLY GHOST, do at the same time assert, that episcopacy may be abrogated by human power, they involve themselves in palpable inconsistency; as then they assert that an inferior power may abrogate what has been established by a superior; that is, that man may annul what GOD has instituted. This not only involves an absurdity in principle, but also leaves CHRIST's Church completely at the disposal of whim, ignorance, interest, and passion. Upon this ground there is no such thing as a principle of unity; no such thing as a ministry deriving its authority from CHRIST; no such thing as Ambassadors of CHRIST, as Stewards of the household of GOD. Those are Ministers who make themselves such, or are made such by the people. No criterion of genuine priesthood remains, nor was ever established. The *body* of CHRIST is as multiform as clay in the hands of the potter, and every thing is a Church, which man pleases to call so.

But if any Episcopalian, who maintains that episcopacy was established by the Apostles, should, at the same time, assert, that the Apostles, in establishing it, acted from their best judgment, and not by the direction of the HOLY GHOST, then they have as great difficulties to encounter, as the above description of Episcopalians.

1. They contradict the whole tenor of the New Testament.

CHRIST instituted a ministry, and promised to be with that ministry to the end of the world. This is beyond a doubt.

2. CHRIST promised the Apostles, that he would send the HOLY GHOST to lead them into all the truth, with which it was necessary for his Church to be acquainted. And, accordingly, the HOLY GHOST descended upon the Apostles. This also is beyond contradiction.

3. The Apostles ordained Presbyters and Deacons; and the Apostle Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus, and Titus to Crete, to ordain those ministers. And it appears, that this was sometimes, if not always, done by the special direction of the HOLY GHOST. These things cannot be denied. Then it follows,

4. That the constitution of the Christian Church, as to its ministry, was fixed and rendered permanent by CHRIST, and that, therefore, the Apostles were not left to their own judgment. But,

5. If we were even to grant that the Apostles *were* left to their own judgment, yet, if episcopacy was established by them, as the present case supposes, then the power of ordination was attached to the order of Bishops, as those episcopalians allow, and as, indeed, the order of things necessarily implies; for in every government, commissions must flow from the fountain

head: then it will follow, that Presbyters, not having been invested with that power by the Apostles, cannot possibly exercise it without usurpation. So that, whether the Apostles acted under the authority of the HOLY GHOST, or from their own judgment, the constitution of the Church having been settled by them, in the article of ordination, no subsequent alteration by others, in this particular, can be deemed valid.

6. To this consideration of invalidity must be added all the consequences resulting from the former case. Those are, leaving the Church entirely at the disposal of whim, ignorance, interest, and passion; and, consequently, implanting in its very constitution the seeds of variety, confusion, and deformity.

From these considerations, it appears to me, that no one who asserts that episcopacy is an apostolic institution, but, at the same time, admits that it is not perpetually binding, (at least, where it may be had) can be considered as holding an opinion consistent with Scripture, with the nature of episcopacy, and with those principles that are necessarily involved in the very idea of government.

I have made these observations to show, that if even the authors whom you quote, should, upon examination, turn out as you would have them, yet, acknowledging episcopacy to be an apostolical institution, their deductions from that fact do not at all affect the point in question. Their opinion upon the consequences of the fact is worth no more than their reasoning upon which the opinion is founded. Let that be correct, or not, they acknowledge that episcopacy is an apostolical institution; and that is all that I am concerned about.

The first writer whom you mention in favour of your cause, is Mr. Dodwell. That you should name *him*, is a very extraordinary instance of imprudence. Perhaps no man ever maintained the divine institution of episcopacy more zealously than he did. The whole tenor of his writings evince this. He does not so much as hint, that the first Bishops were consecrated by Presbyters, as you assert. He repeatedly declares, that the first Bishops were ordained by the Apostles; that every Bishop in his diocese, was what the High Priest was in the Jewish Church; and that as the High Priest was a type of CHRIST, so the Bishop, in the Christian Church, is his representative, or vicegerent. And from this principle, he argues against presbyterian ordination. He held, indeed, the singular opinion, that St. James was divinely appointed to a supremacy over the whole Christian Church, which supremacy he supposed continued till the destruction of Jerusalem: that then it was transferred to the Bishop of Ephesus: but that the Apostles, before their death, established Bishops generally over the Churches; and that a succession from this source had continued through all ages, to the time when he wrote; and that it would continue to the end of the world.

Mr. Dodwell also supposed, that as this general establishment

of episcopacy by the Apostles, acting under the influence of the HOLY GHOST, did not take place till all the Epistles were written, we are not to look for a particular and explicit exposition of this ecclesiastical regimen in the New Testament; but that, as the whole Church of CHRIST, in every age subsequent to the apostolic, bears testimony to the divine institution of episcopacy, the fact is thereby as fully ascertained as the canon of Scripture, the institution of the LORD's day, and the practice of baptizing infants; and this, he maintains, is as complete proof, as can be produced for any matter of fact whatever.

How you could think of naming Dodwell, as in any degree, or in any point of view, favourable to your side of the question, is more than I can comprehend. He has always been considered as a strong Episcopalian, upon the ground of divine right. He does not stop here; but deduces from this principle, what appeared to him to be its genuine consequence, viz. the invalidity of presbyterian ordination; the inefficacy, but by *extraordinary grace*, of all the administrations of Presbyters thus ordained; and the unjustifiable schism of all who set up Churches upon a principle of *parity*. If such a man can be of any service to you, Sir, you are very welcome to him.

The next person whom you name, not indeed as maintaining a *parity* of ministers, but as holding the opinion, that Presbyters were not ordained till after the canon of Scripture was closed, is Dr. Hammond. Pray, Sir, why do you quote writers who can render you no manner of service? You know very well, that Dr. Hammond maintained the divine right of episcopacy. If he had a particular notion about the time when Presbyters were ordained, what is that to the general principle? It is very probable, Sir, that you and I have not precisely the same notions about the doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement; and if we were to give our sentiments to the public upon these points, would it not be very preposterous in a Socinian to quote us as not agreeing precisely in our ideas? I have no doubt, Sir, that you and some of your brethren, differ considerably in your views of the divine decrees, freedom of will, election, and reprobation; yet were I disputing with you upon these points, I should think it very weak, to adduce the particulars in which you differ, as proofs against the truth of those doctrines. A perfect agreement in men's conceptions upon any doctrine, is hardly to be expected. When they admit the truth of the doctrine, that is all that a reasonable man should look for. No men more firmly believed the divine right of episcopacy than Dodwell and Hammond; and no men more strenuously maintained it.

The next thing worthy of notice is, your quoting four authorities among the Papists, in proof that Bishops and Priests were the same in the primitive Church.

Your first authority is the canons of Elfric, in the year 990. In those canons, you say, 'Bishops and Presbyters are declared to be *of the same order*.'

Pray, Sir, why did you not give us the words of the canon? I ask you seriously, do you think yourself entitled to an answer, when you do not give us the words of an author? If this had happened but in a few instances, a patient reader might bear with it; but when it occurs so very often, it is almost intolerable.

The canon which you must have had in view, is the seventeenth. "It describes," says Collier, "the character of a mass, or Parish-Priest, and lays it down for a rule, that there is no difference between a Priest and a Bishop, *excepting that the Bishop has the privilege of ordination, of visiting the diocese, and managing the grand affairs of religion;* and though both act within the same order, yet the *nobler* part of it belongs to the Bishop."[l]

Can it be possible, Sir, that you see any thing in this canon favourable to your cause? Is it of any consequence, whether we say Bishops and Presbyters are of a different *order*, or of a different *degree?* I prefer the *former;* but I do not find fault with any Episcopalian who uses the *latter*, if he acknowledges, as is done in the canon, that ordination, and supremacy of jurisdiction, are the prerogatives of the Bishop. These powers, in the opinion of the generality of Episcopalians, create a different order; and to me it appears the more correct way of speaking. Bishop Burnet has already been quoted as observing, that the word *degree* came into vogue in the Romish Church, after the doctrine of transubstantiation was broached; but, at the same time, it was maintained by all those who thus spoke, that the Bishop has powers, by divine institution, which the Priest has not. And this being acknowledged, it is of no consequence whether we use the word *order*, or *degree*. This will serve as an answer to two or three other quotations of the same kind.

Your second authority, before the reformation, is Anselme, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died about the year 1109. You say, that he explicitly tells us, that, "by the apostolic institution, all Presbyters are Bishops." You then refer to his *Commentary on the Epistles to Titus and the Philippians.*

Upon reading this quotation, it struck me that there must be an error somewhere or other. I could not think that Anselme, who, according to Du Pin, was a very strong Catholic, would use the language of your quotation. To satisfy myself, I first consulted Collier, who gives a list of Anselme's works, but he does not mention the *Commentary* you have quoted. I next consulted Du Pin, who is still more minute in his list of the Archbishop's writings; but I found no such Commentary in the list. I then had recourse to Cave's *Historia Literaria*, in which I find the Commentary marked as a *spurious work.*[m] This, Sir, is an unfortunate elucidation for the extract you have given us.

Your next quotation is from the Canon Law. Justelle's *Col-*

l. *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 207. m Vol. II. p. 162. Saeculum Hildebrandinum.

lection of Canons is not within my reach. But even in the quotation which you have given us, I do not see any thing that is much amiss. It seems to be nothing more nor less than Jerome's opinion, that, to prevent schism, Bishops were set over the Presbyters by general consent. This may be true or not, according to the sense in which it is taken. I suspect, Sir, that all is not quite right with respect to this quotation; but I cannot, at present, throw the same light upon it that I have upon the one immediately preceding.

Your last Catholic testimony is from the *Consultations* of Cassander. This testimony does not differ materially from the last; and as I have not access to Cassander's writings, I must content myself with the same answer that I have given to your extract from the Canon Law.

I have now, Sir, shown that the canons of Elfric are pointedly, and decidedly in our favour; and that the testimony which you ascribe to Anselme, is not taken from his genuine writings. And as to the two last quotations, although I cannot at present throw that light upon them that I wish; yet, I have not a doubt, that if I had the books to which you refer, I should be able to show that you have failed as much in these as in the others.

I shall close this letter with one observation.—It is an easy matter, by means of scraps, and sentences expressed in vague terms, to make an author speak almost any thing that we wish. In this way I could make you appear a very good Episcopalian, and a person who had not access to your book would be at a loss to prove, that the quotations were partial and imperfect. I have, in the course of this discussion, shown this kind of management to be so common in your 'Letters,' that I suspect, even your friends will shrug up their shoulders, and make some very unfavourable exclamations. They, no doubt, will acquit you, as I certainly do, of all designed misrepresentation; but still they will, if I mistake not, be pretty unanimously of opinion, that you ought to have been more particular in your investigation, and have trusted less to others.

LETTER XVII.

REV. SIR:

AFTER giving your readers four quotations from authors before the reformation, in favour, as you suppose, of Presbytery, you proceed to observe, that 'all the first reformers of the Church of England freely acknowledged Bishops and Presbyters to have been the same in the apostolic age; and only defended diocesan episcopacy as a wise human appointment.'

This I have proved to be most grossly erroneous. I have

proved it from the preface to the Ordinal, and from the Ordination Offices. I have proved that Cranmer placed episcopacy upon the ground of apostolic institution, and that all the reformers were of the same mind. So much evidence has been produced upon this point, that I cannot conceive it possible for any human mind to resist its force.

I have also proved that you committed an error, when you asserted that Bancroft was the first who placed episcopacy upon the ground of *divine right*. Whitgift had done so seventeen years before Bancroft.[a] The former published his answer to the *Admonition to the Parliament*, in the year 1571; the latter, by your own account, preached his famous sermon in the year 1588.

You next, Sir, give us a long quotation from Dr. Raignolds, from which it appears, that he did not conceive episcopacy was founded upon divine right. To quote Raignolds in favour of the *human* institution of episcopacy is much like quoting a Presbyterian in favour of it. You must certainly know that this learned professor was a leading man among the Puritans, and that he was the prolocutor of their commissioners, at the famous Hampton court conference. What a number of cavils he advanced on that occasion, may be seen in Collier's *Ecclesiastical History*. To quote such a man can hardly be considered as candid. It is true, he did not separate from the Church; and, therefore, I suppose, you rank him among Episcopalians. But a man cannot, with any propriety, be viewed in that light, although he may be officiating in an Episcopal church, when he renounces the very principle which discriminates episcopacy from Presbytery. It is not a form of prayer that makes the distinction; for there are several Presbyterian Churches that use forms. It is not any doctrines peculiar to either that discriminate; the doctrines, except the article of election, with its counterpart reprobation, are the same, or nearly so. It is not that the one uses rites and ceremonies, and that the other does not use them; for rites and ceremonies, in a greater or less degree, belong to all Churches that have any pretensions to decency. No; these are not the points of difference between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The grand distinction between them is, as I have already observed, that one holds episcopacy to have been instituted by the Apostles, guided by the HOLY GHOST; the other, that a parity of ministers rests upon the same foundation. Raignolds, therefore, had no just claim to the character of an Episcopalian, and, consequently, his testimony is that of an enemy, and not of a friend.

Your next quotation is from Archbishop Whitgift, who, you say, 'referring to the great attention which Bancroft's sermon had excited, observed that it *had done good*; but added, that with respect to the offensive doctrine which it contained, he *rather wished, than believed it to be true*.'

a COLLIER'S *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 537.

I shall give you the answer to this, which Dr. Chandler gave forty years ago to Dr. Chauncy, when he urged it. "This is incredible in itself, and seems to rest altogether on Neal's authority. This historian, in his account of Bancroft's sermon, refers to no other evidence than Strype's *Life of Whitgift;* and in that book the anecdote is not to be met with. But near this time, *viz.* in 1589, the Archbishop, in answer to the calumnies of *Martin Marprelate*, says, 'that he was persuaded, that there ought to be by the word of God, a superiority among the ministers of the Church; and that it was sufficiently proved in his book against Cartwright. And that he was at all times ready to justify it by the holy Scriptures, and by the testimony of all antiquity.'[b] This clearly shows that the Archbishop did not *wish*, but *believed* Bancroft's doctrine to be true."[c]

This testimony, with that quoted in the last letter, evinces, beyond contradiction, that Whitgift maintained episcopacy on the ground of divine right. When, therefore, he says, (as you quote him) "It is well known that the manner and form of government used in the Apostles' time, and expressed in the Scriptures, neither *is* now, nor *can*, nor *ought to be* observed, *either touching the persons or functions;*" he must certainly mean *persons and functions*, which are not essential to episcopal regimen, otherwise he flatly contradicts himself. That a man should write a book to prove episcopacy to be founded on the word of God, and after, in his own opinion, he has fully gained his point; that he should then very gravely tell his readers, notwithstanding episcopacy is founded on divine authority, yet men may abolish it whenever they think proper, and substitute in its place whatever whim may suggest; that he should do this, carries improbability upon the very face of it. But conclusive as this presumption would be with every candid man, yet I am not obliged to depend altogether upon it. I have Whitgift's own words, from which, it will appear that, I have represented him with perfect correctness.

It is well known that the Puritans maintained, that nothing is to be admitted into the worship or discipline of the Church, that is not prescribed in the word of God. This Whitgift denies; and strenuously contends, that things of a mutable nature, grounded altogether upon expediency, *are* and *must* be admitted into the Church of Christ. Thus, in his defence of the *Answer to the Admonition*, written by Cartwright, he has the following words—"Visible and external government, is that which is executed by man, and consisteth of external discipline, and visible ceremonies practised in that Church, that containeth in it both good and evil. For so much as you make mention of excommunication, I take it that you mean the external government of the Church, and that kind of government. And yet I must ask you,—whether you mean that this government [excommunica-

b *Life of Whitgift*, p. 304.

c *Appeal defended*, p. 27.

tion and other censures] is necessary at all times, or then when the Church is collected together, and in such place where it may have government. For you know that the Church is sometimes by persecution so dispersed, that it appeareth not, as we read Apocalypse, 6th, so that it cannot have any external government, or exercise of any discipline. But to be short, I confess that in a Church collected together in one place, and at liberty, government [discipline, excommunication, and other censures] is necessary in the second kind of necessity, [that is, without which a thing cannot so well and conveniently be;] but that any one kind of government [discipline, &c.] is so necessary, that without it the Church cannot be saved, or that it may not be altered into some other kind thought to be more expedient, I utterly deny."[d]

Again: Whitgift, speaking of Cartwright's ridiculous assertion, that "the government of the commonwealth must be framed according to the government of the Church, even as the hangings to the house," very justly observes—"this is a dangerous error, and springeth of this, that he doth not distinguish betwixt the essential points of the government of the Church, and the accidental points of the same; for the essential points of ecclesiastical government, may well agree with any lawful state of commonwealth, and civil kind of government; as the Gospel may be truly preached in them all, the sacraments rightly ministered, discipline duly executed, and such like. But the accidental points of government (as the manner of electing ministers, the kind of discipline, accidental ceremonies, and other such like rites and circumstances) may be varied according to time, place, and circumstances."[e] There is a great deal more to the same purpose in other parts of his book.

It is evident from these quotations, that when Whitgift pleads for the mutability of government, he means of discipline, of church censures, of rites and ceremonies; and not of episcopacy. Yet no doubt he maintained, even with respect to episcopacy, what every episcopal writer that I have ever met with maintains, that this government is not absolutely necessary to the very salvation of the Church, but that it is so necessary, that the Church cannot be in a sound and perfect state without it.

I think, Sir, that I have now given sufficient proof, that Whitgift maintained the divine right of episcopacy, in this sense—that it was instituted by the Apostles acting under the direction of the HOLY GHOST, and, therefore, not to be laid aside upon a pretence that it would be more convenient to adopt some other regimen.

The next writer whom I conceive you have misrepresented, is Bishop Bilson. You quote a passage from his work against

d *Defence of the Answer to the Admonition*, p. 80, 87.
e *Table of dangerous doctrines.*

Seminaries, in which, if the passage be correctly quoted, he says, "that Bishops came in *after* the Apostles' time."

I have not the work to which you refer; but I have his book entitled, *The perpetual Government of* CHRIST'S *Church*. In the preface to that work, he has the following words: "Who succeeded the Apostles, whether all Presbyters equally, or certain chief and chosen men, one in every Church and city, trusted with the government both of the people and Presbyters, I have largely debated, and made it plain, as well by the Scriptures as by other ancient writers past all exception, that from the Apostles to the first Nicene council, and so all along to this our age, there have always been selected some of greater gifts than the residue, to succeed in the Apostles' places; to whom it belonged, both to moderate the Presbyters of each Church, and to take the special charge of imposition of hands; and this their singularity in succeeding, and superiority in ordaining, have been observed from the Apostles' times, as the peculiar and substantial marks of episcopal power and calling."

"I know," continues he, "some late writers vehemently spurn at this, and hardly endure any difference betwixt Bishops and Presbyters, unless it be by custom and consent of men, but in no case by any order or institution of the Apostles; whose opinions, together with the authorities on which they build, I have, according to my skill, examined, and find them no way able to rebate the full and sound evidence that is for the contrary. For what more pregnant probation can be required, than that the same power and precepts which Paul gave to Timothy, when he had the charge of Ephesus, remained in all the Churches throughout the world, to certain special and tried persons authorized by the Apostles themselves, and from them derived to their aftercomers by a general and perpetual succession in every Church and city, without conference to enlarge it, or council to decree it; the continuing whereof for three descents, the Apostles saw with their eyes, confirmed with their hands, and St. John, amongst others, witnessed with his pen, as an order of ruling the Church, *approved by the express voice of the* SON OF GOD. When the original proceeded from the Apostles' mouth, and was observed in all the famous places and Churches of Christendom where the Apostles taught, and whilst they lived; can any man doubt whether that course of governing the Church were apostolic? For my part, I confess I am neither so wise as to overreach it with policy, nor so wayward as to withstand it with obstinacy."

It is impossible to reconcile these, and numerous other passages with that which you quote. The great object of Bilson's work is to prove episcopacy an apostolical institution; and I cannot but think that whoever will read him with impartiality, will be satisfied that he has gained his point.—I, therefore, conclude, that the passage which you quote, is not in the original; or that it is so garbled as not to express the author's sense!

Bishop Jewell is another Episcopalian whom you quote for some purpose or other; I do not very well know for what. Do you mean to infer from the quotation, that the Bishop thought episcopacy was a human institution? If that be your meaning, you do him great injustice. Try, Sir, whether you can reconcile that opinion with the following extracts.—"The truth is, this Church hath been persecuted, because she alone, of all the Churches in Europe, has had the blessing and singular favour of GOD to reform with prudence, moderation, and an exact and regular conduct, after great and wise deliberation, by the consent of our Bishops, Convocations, States, and Princes, without tumults and hasty counsels. So that the Papists themselves do even envy our *primitive doctrine, government, and discipline*, and both fear and hate us more than any other of the reformed Churches.—They are the same things that have raised the spleens and animosities of the other side, with whom, whatever is older than Zuinglius and Calvin, is presently popery, and must be destroyed. Tell them that *episcopacy was settled in all Churches in the days of the very Apostles, and by them*, and they reply, the mystery of iniquity began then to work; intimating, if not affirming, that this *holy order* was a part of it."[f] Again: "We believe that there is one Church of GOD—that this Church is the kingdom, the body and spouse of CHRIST; that CHRIST is the only Prince of this kingdom; that there are in the Church divers orders of ministers; that there are some who are Deacons, others who are Presbyters, and others who are Bishops."[g] If any words can be more explicit than these, I know not what they are.

You refer your readers for the quotation from Bishop Jewel to his *Defence of the Apology of the Church of England*, page 248. I have, Sir, looked over that book from page 220 to 275, and over several other parts of the volume, but without the least success. How is this? It is possible indeed that I have missed the place; but I do not believe that I have. It is a folio that I have consulted; perhaps you took your quotation from a book of another size; or rather at second hand, from somebody else, who, I am convinced, has made blundering work. Be this as it may, the extracts which I have given from Jewel's *Apology*, completely settle the point.

Without attending to the order of the writers whom you quote, I shall next notice what you say concerning Bishop Hall. You observe, that he 'exerted himself in favour of the divine right of episcopacy, with as much zeal and ability as any man of his day.'

Now, Sir, this is all that I am contending for. I have been obliged several times to tell you, that I am not endeavouring to unchurch other denominations. That is not the question in this discussion. Here a difference takes place among Episcopalians;

f *Preface to* his *Apology*.

g *Apology*, p. 21.

and we may reasonably expect that it would; for the Scripture has said nothing about the consequences of the opinion I am maintaining. What the essence of a Church is, neither Presbyterians, nor Episcopalians, have as yet determined. Upon the question, what defect unchurches, unanimity is not to be looked for. Some Presbyterians say, the want of a ministry unchurches; others say, it does not. Some of them say, that lay-baptism is invalid; others say, no. Some unchurch Independents and Quakers and some other denominations; other Presbyterians do not. When you shall have the good fortune to agree among yourselves, what is the precise point at which a Church loses that character, perhaps your discoveries will lead Episcopalians to unanimity; till then, I fear, we shall not be agreed, whether the divine right of episcopacy necessarily involves the consequence, that denominations which have not Bishops, when it proceeds from necessity, want a valid ministry; and whether, again, the want of such a ministry completely unchurches.

That Bishop Hall maintained episcopacy upon the ground of divine right, you acknowledge; and yet that he did not think episcopacy absolutely essential to the *being* of a Church, is very certain. He considered that want as the Synod of Dort itself did—a circumstance much to be lamented. Both he and they viewed it as unavoidable; and, therefore, a misfortune, and not a crime.

It is, Sir, rather an amusing circumstance, that what you deem a concession, those staunch Presbyterian divines, to whom the epithet of *Smectymnuan*[h] has been given, should deem no concession at all. Those divines drew up a reply to the *Humble Remonstrance*, supposed to have been written by Bishop Hall. The good Bishop, either from a conviction of the correctness of the opinion, or from an unwillingness to give offence, softened his doctrine in the following manner: "By divine right, is not to be understood an express law of God requiring episcopacy, as of absolute necessity to the *being* of a Church, but an institution of the Apostles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, warranting it where it is, and requiring it where it may be had." This distinction was considered, by the *Smectymnuan* divines, as no distinction at all. They say, "If not requiring it to the *being* of a Church, how then? *Requiring it only where it may be had!* What a strange limitation is this! Where is it that episcopacy *may* not be had, *must* not be had, if it be an ordinance of Christ? Where is it that the Church of Christ may not have word, sacraments, pastors, and Bishops too, if they be his ordinance? What is the meaning of this, *where it may be had?* Does he mean where it may be had with the favour of the Prince? Then the primitive Church had never had any. Or where it may be

h [From a famous work in defence of Presbyterian polity, under the barbarous title of *Smectymnuus*; a word formed from the initials of the persons engaged in its production. *Ed.*]

had with the willing subjection of the people? Then episcopacy shall be an ordinance, if the people will have it so. *Where it may be had!* What? With quiet and conveniency? Then you make that which you call an ordinance of GOD, subject to man's convenience. Or what? With possibility? Requiring that where episcopacy may be had possibly, it should? What is this less than a command?"[1] Thus you see, Sir, that those divines did not consider the Bishop's distinction as worth their acceptance. This, however, was the usual distinction at that time, in order to save the reformed Churches, and I believe it has been generally made ever since.

What I have said with respect to Hall, will answer very well for Davenant. He also maintained the divine institution of episcopacy; but at the same time did not think it essential to the *very being* of a Church.

The next person who deserves attention, is Archbishop Usher. It is well known that this celebrated writer, when speaking of the difference between Bishops and Presbyters, generally used the language of the schoolmen. He considered the difference between them to consist in a superiority of *degree*, as between the High Priest and the Priests, and not in a superiority of *order*. This is evident from the quotation which you have given us. It further appears from that quotation, that the Archbishop considered ordination by Presbyters *schismatical* except in *cases of necessity*—that he considered Churches without Bishops, *very much defective;* and that the Churches in France are in this respect *more excusable*, because they live *under a popish power;* and therefore, are less able to remedy the defect. It is then sufficiently evident, that the difference between Usher and other Episcopalians was principally *verbal*. He ascribed a real pre-eminence to the Bishop, which was communicated by a new ordination; but he considered that pre-eminence as raising a Bishop to a higher *degree* in the priesthood, but not as constituting a distinct *order*. This is, in truth, a matter of no consequence.

The opinion of the Archbishop with respect to this subject, is given us by Dr. Bernard, who was many years his chaplain. The following are the Doctor's words: "For that superiority *only in degree* which he (the primate) saith a Bishop hath above a Presbyter; it is not to be understood as an arbitrary matter, at the pleasure of men, but that he held it to be of *apostolical institution*, and no more a diminution of the pre-eminency and authority of episcopacy, than the denomination of lights given in common by Moses to all of them in the firmament, detracts from the sun and moon, whom he calls the *greater*, and were assigned of GOD to have the rule of the rest; though the difference between them be only *gradual*, yet there is a *derivative subordination*, as the pre-eminency of the first born was but

[1] BRETT *on Episcopacy*, p. 144, 145.

gradual—they were all brethren, but to him was given of GOD the excellency, or supremacy of *dignity and power*—to him they must *bow*, or *be subject*, and he must have *the rule over them*. And that this *gradus* [degree] is both derived from the pattern prescribed by GOD in the Old Testament, and from the imitation thereof brought in by the Apostles, and confirmed by CHRIST in the time of the New, the primate hath so fully confirmed in that learned tractate of his, *of the Original of Bishops*, which he hath deduced *from the apostolical times*, that I know not what can be added."[k]

It is now evident that Usher believed episcopacy to be an apostolical institution; and this he abundantly proves in the above named tract. Yet the Archbishop did not think those who were without Bishops from necessity, thereby unchurched; but declares his readiness to communicate with them, were he among them: but those who *can* have Bishops and *will* not, (as was the case with the Dissenters in England and Ireland,) he considered as schismatics, with whom he could not possibly communicate. This, I believe, is a correct view of the Archbishop's sentiments; and it evidently does not come up to your wish, which is, to make that great prelate speak in favour of the *human* institution of episcopacy.

Stillingfleet is another writer whom you quote. His famous *Irenicum* is always mentioned by our opponents with great applause. He wrote that book when he was about twenty-four years old, with a view to moderate the violent controversies which the dissenters unceasingly kept alive against the Church. He perceived that so long as both parties placed their respective regimen on the ground of divine right, there was a great gulf between them, which could not be passed by either. He, therefore, from a too sanguine hope of reconciling them, adopted a neutral principle, viz. that the Scriptures prescribe no form of ecclesiastical government; but have left it to the prudence of every Church to regulate itself by existing circumstances. This is a specious principle, which would most certainly captivate numbers. But had that young divine been acquainted with human nature, he would not have entertained much hope of success from his wide and comprehensive scheme. It turned out as all such schemes do—it displeased both parties; and afterwards, when his judgment was matured, it displeased himself too. For he says in his preface to the *Unreasonableness of Separation*, "Will you not allow one single person who happened to write about these matters when he was *very young*, in twenty years time of the most busy and thoughtful part of his life, to *see reason to alter his judgment?*" In a sermon preached on the occasion of an ordination at St. Paul's many years after he wrote his *Irenicum*, when his judgment was perfectly matured, and his reading had become more extensive, and better

k *The Judgment of the late Archbishop*, &c. p. 127.

digested; on that occasion, when he would be particularly attentive to what he said, and would not suffer the warmth of imagination to hurry him into bold and positive assertions, he thus seriously speaks: "I cannot find any argument of force in the New Testament to prove that *ever* the Christian Churches were under the sole government of Presbyters." Again: "This succession was not in mere *presidency of order;* but the Bishops succeeded the Apostles in the *government* over those Churches." Further: "There is great reason to believe the apostolical *succession* to be of divine institution, as the *canon of Scripture*, or the observation of the LORD's day." And in his *Unreasonableness of Separation*, he asserts, that "the case of Timothy is an uncontrollable instance of diocesan episcopacy."

But it seems all this is but 'a kind of vague and feeble recantation.' If this be 'a vague and feeble,' I beg you will let us know what *a precise and strong* recantation is. When a man at one time says, that episcopacy is *not* a divine institution, and, at another, says *it is;* he must have remarkably nice discernment, who perceives this to be nothing more than 'a vague and feeble recantation.'

This change of opinion in Stillingfleet, after all, is, I acknowledge, of no material consequence; but then I must, at the same time, think, that those who rely so much upon his opinion at the age of twenty-four, and treat with so much indifference his opinion at the age of forty-five, act very preposterously, if they consider merely the opinion of a learned man, and not the weight of the reasons upon which the opinion is founded. For the opinions of learned men are often as worthless as those of the unlearned.

Well, then, the opinion of Stillingfleet, whether *for* or *against* episcopacy, is of no consequence; but it seems the reasonings and authorities 'upon which he grounds his opinions have undergone no change.' This is undoubtedly correct: They have precisely the same force *now* that they *ever* had. But is not that the case also with respect to his latter opinions? You will undoubtedly say—yes. We are come then to this point, Stillingfleet, in his *Irenicum*, is neither an Episcopalian, nor a Presbyterian; he has taken neutral ground; and the *reasonings* and *authorities* by which he maintains his ground, bear equally upon both parties. This being the true state of the case, why, Sir, do you name him? Does he support presbytery upon the ground of divine right? He certainly does not. He labours to prove that it has no title to that sanction. He does the same with respect to episcopacy. If, then, his 'reasonings and authorities' have never been answered either by himself or others, they disprove the principle upon which both parties rest their regimen; and, consequently, the constitution of the Christian Church is a matter subjected to men's disposal. Are you prepared, Sir, to adopt this principle?

Were I to leave the matter here, Stillingfleet's *Irenicum* would

do *us* no more harm than it does *you;* nor *you* any more than it does *us*. But *we* have something to say which *you* have not. The learned author certainly changed his opinion; and still more, he wrote in favour of apostolical diocesan episcopacy. Now, as that is the point in dispute, if he has proved it, he has answered his *Irenicum*, although he has not made a reply to every thing asserted in that book. When the foundation is removed, the building must necessarily fall to the ground. His 'reasonings and authorities' appeared to himself, and I believe they do to all Episcopalians, to go to the very point of establishing episcopacy upon the ground of apostolical institution; and, if so, the *Irenicum* is substantially refuted.

But this is not all. Not only Stillingfleet himself, but others have refuted all the leading principles of that book. I do not, indeed, know of any author who has professedly and formally answered the whole of it; but several have taken particular reasons and authorities, and have shown the one fallacious, and the other ill founded; and Stillingfleet himself must have thought so, otherwise he would not have changed his opinion. You indeed intimate, that he was influenced in this change by the hope of preferment, and the fear of giving offence, if he adhered to the principles of the *Irenicum*. But this is too gross an imputation, and utterly unworthy of a candid and liberal mind.

Further still. If Stillingfleet's 'reasonings and authorities' have not been answered, it certainly must be because they *cannot* be answered; for assuredly it could not have proceeded from a want of learning, talents, and zeal. I must then suppose that you have adopted those unanswerable 'reasonings and authorities,' otherwise you are not true to your cause. But seriously, Sir, it does not appear to me, nor to any Episcopalian that I have heard give an opinion upon your book, that you have said any thing that is unanswerable. I cannot but flatter myself that every thing you have said has been pretty well sifted, and that the result is a vast deal more chaff than wheat.

You next quote Bishop Burnet as a friend to parity of ministers; or, at least, that imparity is a matter left to human prudence.—"I acknowledge (says he) Bishop and Presbyter to be one and the same office, and so plead for no new office-bearer in the Church."

Whatever Burnet may have been when he was a Professor in the college of Glasgow, at which time he wrote his vindication of the Church of Scotland, certain it is, that he was afterwards an Episcopalian, upon the ground of apostolic and divine right. In examining the principles of the reformers, I have produced several quotations which expressly maintain that doctrine. I will now give another from the Bishop's *Exposition of the thirty-nine Articles*.[1] "CHRIST appointed a succession of pastors in different ranks, to be continued in his Church for the

1 Page 284.

work of the Gospel, and that as the Apostles settled the Churches, they appointed different orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." There certainly is nothing for you to say after this. That Burnet, however, admitted a case of necessity is undoubtedly true. This has always been the *salvo:* The Church is imperfect without Bishops; but where they cannot be had, men must submit to the privation, and do as well as they can; for *necessity*, says Burnet, *has no law.*[m]

That Tillotson, whom you introduce to our notice, was a very moderate Churchman, is pretty well understood. If he had not been a sort of *neutral* man, it is probable that he would not have been nominated to the See of Canterbury by King William, who, you know, was a rigid Presbyterian. Tillotson was, I believe, as low with respect to the *regimen* as the *doctrines* of the Church. He was strongly suspected of Arianism and Universalism; and men of such principles care very little about Church order, any farther than as it contributes to decency.

That Wake, Bingham, Pretyman, and Gisborne, assert the apostolic institution of episcopacy, the extracts you have given us fully prove. Bingham and Wake, particularly the former, are among its ablest advocates. Yet these four divines do not consider it as essential to the very being of a Church. When Christians *can* have it, they *ought* to have it; but when they cannot, necessity frees them from all blame. This appears to be the more common opinion of Episcopalians.

Lord King, whom you quote, wrote a book to prove that *Congregational* episcopacy is an apostolical institution. He was answered by Slater, a Presbyter of the Church of England; and so completely was he refuted, that Lord King himself became sensible of his error, and acknowledged Slater's victory. This has always been confidently asserted. However this may be, it is certain, that his Lordship never made any reply, nor has any other person done it for him, that I have ever heard of. Indeed, *Congregational* episcopacy has so little to be said in its favour, that no learning nor ingenuity can give it the smallest degree of plausibility. It was never thought of till some years after the reformation; and its weakness and novelty have been so completely exposed by Stillingfleet, Maurice, Bingham, and Slater, that it is astonishing to me that it should have been revived by Dr. Campbell, and maintained by yourself with only one point of difference. But, as I have already observed, the controversy, every now and then, must be revived; and our opponents, not being deficient in sagacity, see very clearly, that it will not do to take notice of the several triumphant answers that have been given, at different times, to their hypothesis.

You have given us, Sir, two or three extracts from a Bishop Crofts, whose name is so obscure, that not one of our clergy in

m Since I sent my manuscript to the press, I have found another testimony from Burnet. He says, "Whereas, by divine institution, all Bishops were equal, both in order and jurisdiction," &c. *Preface to Vind. Ord. Ch. of England.*

this city has ever heard of him. All I know about him, is contained in a *Prefatory Discourse* to an *Examination of Burnet's Exposition of the thirty-nine Articles*. The author says, "There was a pamphlet in King Charles the Second's reign called *Naked Truth*, that made a great deal of noise for awhile, because it was supposed to be written by a Bishop, with whose station and character the scope and design of it did very ill agree; which was to undermine the Church, throw down its walls, and lay all open. What was principally aimed at, and zealously contended for, was liberty of thought and opinion; scarce allowing it to be fit to tie men up to any sort of doctrine by creeds or subscriptions; much less to confine men to any particular constitution, be it that of episcopacy, or any other whatever."

"Whatever prospect the author of that book might have at the time he published it, the opposition which the project of a *comprehension*, scored out in it, met with at that time, quashed all hopes of it during that reign."

It appears from this account, that Crofts was a man of very *comprehensive* principles, an enemy to all creeds and subscriptions, and disposed to let into the Church men of all principles, both as to doctrine and government. If *doctrine* was not regarded by such a man, certainly *government* would not be.—He was answered, I find, by Bishop Burnet, and some others.

As to Willet, Holland, Whitaker, Forbes, and Moreton, as I have not access to their works, I cannot say any thing to the quotations you have given us. They may be correct, or not. I will admit them to be perfectly so. And then I ask, what do you infer from them? It must be either *something*, or *nothing*. *Nothing*, you will hardly avow. What then is the *something?* Is it, that it is probable that episcopacy is a human institution, because these five men (or twenty times five, if you please) thought so? Of that inference, I know you would be ashamed. Well then, if it adds nothing to the probability of the opinion, the inference is, precisely—*nothing*. Thus, Sir, you have thrown away *your* time, and have made me throw away *mine*.

I have now shown, I think, with uncontrollable evidence, that the reformers of the Church of England, and all her greatest and best writers, on the subject of ecclesiastical regimen, maintain the apostolical and divine right of episcopacy. Yet, at the same time I acknowledge, that they do not consider it as essential to the *very being* of a Church; but after making this concession, they insist upon it as necessary to a well organized, sound, and perfectly apostolical Church; and that a departure from it where it is, is an unjustifiable schism; except when a Church imposes upon its members sinful terms of communion.

But although there are many great names who have thus mitigated the principle, that episcopacy is of divine right; yet it must also be acknowledged, that there are many who do not admit these qualifications, but insist upon it, and give reasons of

great weight for their opinion, that if episcopacy be a divine institution, it must be *essential* to a Christian Church, if a ministry be so. But if *a ministry* be not essential to a Church, then they acknowledge that episcopacy is not. This question I shall not discuss at this late period of the controversy; nor indeed do I think, that it is a question a conscientious man would wait to have decided, were he about to make a choice of the Church to which he should attach himself. He would, it appears to me, reason thus. 'If episcopacy be a divine institution, it is my duty to become a member of that Church in which it is found, unless sinful terms of communion be required. Whether episcopacy be essential to the being of a Church, or not, certain I am that it is my duty to submit to a divine institution. By this submission, I shall be free from all doubts and difficulties; but should I act otherwise, I must rely altogether upon my own reasoning, and that of others. This may, or may not be right; but in the other case, I shall be perfectly free from all misgivings.' This appears to me to be the conclusion, at which a conscientious man would arrive.

Before I conclude this letter, it may be well for me to state, in what sense I consider episcopacy as resting upon the ground of *divine right*.

A thing may be said to be divinely instituted, in three senses.

1. As God positively ordains it by his own express command, or by the express command of his Son Jesus Christ. In this sense, I do not take episcopacy to be a divine institution. Nor in this sense is the Christian sabbath, or infant baptism, or the canon of Scripture, entitled to the sanction of divine institution.

2. A thing may be said to be of divine institution, when it is delivered by men divinely inspired; as are all those precepts and ordinances, delivered by the Apostles and Prophets, by divine inspiration. Every thing of that kind must be deemed of divine institution, because God, by his Holy Spirit, has commanded it.

3. Whatever is founded upon a divine commission, as the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and the power of the keys, is of divine institution.

In the two last senses, I take episcopacy to be of divine institution. For, if the Holy Ghost inspired the Apostles to establish episcopacy in the Church, it is certainly of divine institution, although there may be no express and formal precept for that purpose. Or if the Apostles, by virtue of the commission which they received from Jesus Christ, established episcopacy, it must, if not immediately, yet mediately, be grounded upon divine institution. For if the Apostolic commission was founded upon divine authority, as it certainly was, then all commissions derived from that source, and within the limits of that commission, are also mediately founded upon divine authority; and in this sense, at the least, every one that believes episcopacy

not to be a mere human institution, must believe it to have a divine sanction.

This statement is, I believe, agreeable to the sentiment of the best writers on our side of the question. I am sure that it perfectly coincides with the opinion of Bishop Saunderson. After observing that episcopacy is not founded upon a peremptory command of GOD in his word, he says, "There is a secondary and more extended signification of that term, [divine right] which is also of frequent use among divines. In which sense such things, as having no express command in the word, yet are found to have authority and warrant from the institution, example, and approbation, either of CHRIST himself, or his Apostles; and have (in regard of the importance and usefulness of the things themselves) been held by the consentient judgment of all the Churches of CHRIST in the primitive and succeeding ages, needful to be continued: such things, I say, are usually and interpretatively said to be of divine right."

Again he says: "They, therefore, that so speak of this government as established by divine right, are not all of them necessarily to be understood as if they meant it in that first and strictest sense [as founded upon positive precept.] Sufficient it is for the justificatiou of the Church of England, in the constitution and government thereof, that it is (as it certainly is) of divine right in the latter and larger signification; that is to say, of apostolical institution and approbation; exercised by the Apostles themselves, and by other persons in their times, appointed and enabled thereunto by them, according to the voice of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and by virtue of the commission they had received from him."

"Which, besides that it is clear from evident texts of Scripture, and from the testimony of as ancient and authentic records as the world hath any to show, for the attesting of any other part of the established doctrine of the Church of England; so it is evidently deduced out of sundry passages in the *Book of Consecration*, and hath been constantly and uniformly maintained by our best writers, and by all the sober, orderly, and orthodox sons of this Church."[n]

Thus, Sir, I think it is as clear that the episcopal order is of divine institution, as that the order of Presbyters is. There is no positive precept which ordains the office of a Presbyter; but we see that order in the Scriptures, and we know that it was the sense of the Apostles, and of the whole primitive Church, that it was to be continued to the end of the world.

There is no possibility of guarding any doctrine of Christianity, or any of its institutions, from the cavils of men wedded to their own systems, and peculiar ways of thinking. There is no objection that has been made by the Presbyterians against episcopacy, that has not been made by Independents

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n SAUNDERSON'S *Episcopacy not prejudicial to Regal power*, Sect. ii. No. 3, 4, 6.

against presbytery; and what is not a little amusing, the Presbyterians were obliged to have recourse to the weapons of Episcopalians, in order to defend themselves. It is curious to read the controversy between those two denominations of dissenters, as we have it in the *jus divinum*, &c. When the Independents denied the perpetuity of the ministry by an uninterrupted succession, the Presbyterian divines replied, "All that is written in the epistles concerning the ordainers and the qualifications of the ordained, is directed to Timothy and Titus." To prove the constant succession of the ministry, they argue, like staunch Churchmen—"That CHRIST was sent, and had his commission from his Father. That CHRIST, as he was sent of his Father, so he sent forth his Apostles. That the Apostles went about ordaining Elders in every Church, and that the Apostle Paul ordained Timothy and Titus. [Mark this.] That these ordained others, and that as Timothy was entrusted with the word of CHRIST, so he was commanded to commit the same trust to faithful men, that so there might be a succession of teachers." They also urge *Matt.* xxviii. 20, *I am alway with you, even unto the end of the world.* And 1 *Tim.* vi. 14, *Keep this commandment until the appearing of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST; and several other texts.

When the assembly urge against the Independents the testimony of the fathers, the practice of antiquity, and of all former ages, for a succession of ministers, the fanatics pay them in their own coin, telling them that "corruptions, and antichristianism, and tyranny, came very early into the Church; that the mystery and the ministry of the man of sin were working in the first centuries; that in this apostacy, the Church, which had been a chaste virgin, became the mother of harlots and abominations—Bethel turned into Bethaven, and the ministry wholly lost under Antichrist."

To this the Westminster divines reply, that "the truths, ordinances, servants, and ministries of CHRIST, do not therefore cease to be of CHRIST, because some, either by mistake, or by design, shall say, they are of Antichrist—that it is a great cheat put upon the saints of GOD in this nation, in scaring people from the doctrine of CHRIST, by persuading them to avoid Antichrist." And, therefore, they earnestly intreat their respective congregations "not to be affrighted at the bug-bear words Antichristian and Popish." They tell the fanatics, that "no true ministry, no true Church—that the LORD JESUS hath given the ministry to the Church, to continue till all come to the unity of the faith, which will not be till the day of judgment."

I shall make but one more extract from the *Jus divinum*. When the fanatics assert that the people have a right to ordain ministers, the assembly ask, "By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority? Show us your warrant out of the word. Why was Titus sent to appoint Elders in every city? Might not the people say, what need Paul leave

Titus to do that which we can do ourselves? Add that which to us seems of weight, that all that is written in the epistles concerning the ordainers, and the qualifications of the ordained, is all written in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, who were church-officers. In the other epistles which were written to the Churches, there is no mention made of these things, which doth abundantly prove to us, that the work of ordination is a work belonging to ministers, and not to the people. And they alone who have received this church-power from the Apostles, can transmit it to others." Here is the doctrine of uninterrupted succession most clearly. Now let us change but one word, and put Presbyter instead of people, and see how those reverend gentlemen plead the episcopal cause. "By what authority do you Presbyters do these things, and who gave you this authority? Why was Titus left in Crete, or Timothy in Ephesus, to ordain Elders? Might not those Elders say, what need Paul leave Timothy to do that which we can do ourselves? All that is written in the epistles concerning ordainers, is written in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, who were the church-officers for this purpose. In the other epistles there is no mention made of these things, which doth abundantly prove that the work of ordination is a work belonging to Timothy and Titus, and not to the Presbyters; and they alone who have received can transmit it." Thus the *Presbyterian* calls on the *fanatic* to show his commission; the *Episcopalian*, with the very same reason, calls upon the *Presbyterian* to show *his*. Where is the consistency of all this?

I have now, Sir, examined every thing material in your letter upon the 'Concessions of Episcopalians,' and I have shown that all the authors whom you quote (four or five excepted, whose works I have not,) maintained episcopacy upon the ground of apostolical and divine right. There is, indeed, a difference of opinion among Episcopalians with respect to the *consequences* of this principle, as there is among Presbyterians with respect to the consequences of the divine right of Presbytery; but this, in either case, does not affect the principle. It is, therefore, weak and sophistical to urge this difference against either presbytery or episcopacy.

I forgot, Sir, to make, in their proper place, a few observations upon what you ascribe to Bishop White. It may be well, although not in order, just to notice what you say. You assert that he maintains, 'that the doctrine which founds episcopacy upon *divine right*, has never been embraced by the great body of the most esteemed divines in the Church of England.'[o]

This may be true, and yet leave episcopacy upon as high ground as I wish to place it. By *divine right*, Bishop White means *positive precept*, or a direct command in so many words, that there shall be three orders in the Church—Bishops, Pres-

o Letter VI. p. 239.

byters, and Deacons, and that they shall continue to the end of the world. There is no heterodoxy in this opinion. All the great episcopal writers acknowledge this to be the truth. But will you venture to assert, that Bishop White does not place episcopacy upon the ground of apostolical institution? You certainly will not; because the following quotation would stare you in the face. "There having been an episcopal power originally lodged by JESUS CHRIST with his Apostles, and by them exercised generally in person, but sometimes by delegation, (as in the instances of Timothy and Titus) the same was conveyed by them to one pastor in each Church, which generally comprehended all the Christians in a city, and a convenient surrounding district. Thus were created the Apostolic successors." Again: "It seemed good to the Apostles to appoint some of these with a superéminent commission, of which there were instances in Timothy and Titus; and the persons so appointed have *handed down their commission through the different ages of the Church.* This is the originally constituted order."[p]

Now (to use the words of Dr. Hobart with a little alteration) "if you will make these concessions, and hold this language, you fairly give up your cause. You maintain all that the Episcopalian could wish. And we shall be glad to hear on what grounds you will justify your rejection of the *originally constituted order*, and of degrees of the ministry, who had their *beginning from* CHRIST *and his blessed Apostles.*"

It is now, Sir, very evident, that Bishop White holds the *divine right* of episcopacy in this sense; that it was instituted by the Apostles under the direction of the HOLY GHOST, and consequently, according to the will of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. He surely then is at variance with presbyterian parity.

I shall in my next, consider your letter upon 'the rise and progress of episcopacy.'

LETTER XVIII.

REV. SIR:

MY labour is now happily drawing to a close. I have little more to do than to take a view of your *fanciful* statement of 'the rise and progress of episcopacy.' I do not conceive that it is *necessary* for me to do this; for if I have proved the fact, that episcopacy is an apostolical institution, all the efforts of your ingenuity to show that it took its rise long after the death of the Apostles, must be ascribed to the 'audacity of fancy,' and be deemed utterly inconsistent with the truth of history. No, Sir,

p HOBART'S *Apology*, page 139, 140.

it is not because you have said any thing in your Eighth Letter, which in any degree affects the evidence I have produced, that I am led to examine your plausible attempt to account for what *never has yet* been accounted for; but because I shall be furnished with an opportunity of presenting to my readers, what I deem complete moral demonstration, that episcopacy is not a human, but a divine institution. This is my leading motive for continuing this discussion: my secondary motive is, to show your readers, that you have exhibited to them a perfect tissue of conjectures, fallacies, and misrepresentations of facts.

There is a question, which, at the very outset of this inquiry, will occur to a reflecting mind.—If episcopacy was introduced into the Church *after* the apostolic age, what can be the reason, that it cannot be determined by the advocates for *parity*, when this anti-christian usurpation took its rise? Some of them place it in the close of the first century, before the death of St. John, as Baxter, Chamier, and Du Moulin; others in the beginning of the second century, as Doddridge and Salmasius; others in the middle of that century, as Blondel and the Westminster divines; others at the close of that age, as Campbell and Chauncey; others in the third century, a long list of whom you will find in Sage's *Cyprianic Age;* and others again in the fourth century, as yourself, Lord King, and a few more. Here is a wide range taken by our opponents; not less than the space of two hundred years. Now, this difficulty of pointing out the time when episcopacy took its rise, must be owing either to a want of records, or to the very trifling nature of the change. To the first it has never been ascribed; for the records are sufficiently ample. Nor can it, with the most distant appearance of reason, be ascribed to the latter; for the change was very striking and important; no less than that of depriving the Presbyters throughout the whole Christian Church of their right of ordaining, and of establishing in one person a supremacy of power and jurisdiction. It is not possible to consider such a change as unimportant, and unworthy of notice. This then is the first presumptive proof, that no such change took place.

You endeavour, Sir, to surmount the difficulty, which arises from the wide difference of opinion among Presbyterians, with respect to the date of episcopacy, by saying that we cannot tell the time when *infant communion* began in the Church. And do you seriously think, Sir, that this, were it true, would obviate the difficulty? How is it possible that you should not see, that there is no parallel between the two cases? What human being did *infant communion* deprive of his rights? What was there in this practice to excite the passions of men? What to produce violent contention, and strenuous resistance? Was the adult injured by it? Did it exclude him from the altar? Not a single consideration can be perceived by the human mind to induce it to think, that any thing more than verbal contention

would be the issue. But in the other case, the Presbyters were deprived of their most sacred rights. The right of ordaining, which was given them by JESUS CHRIST, and which they were as sure belonged to them as that they held the office of Presbyters, was wrested out of their hands. A *parity* of power and jurisdiction, which they had derived from the same source, was abolished, and a supremacy established in an individual, in every city. I appeal to every man who is acquainted with human nature, whether such flagrant injustice was not sufficient to rouse the fiercest passions of the heart? Let the trial be made at this day, by a number of the most daring spirits among the Presbyterian ministers in this country, to seat themselves in episcopal chairs. To ask a child what would be the issue, would be to insult his understanding.

It must be obvious to every reflecting mind, that there is a great difference between opinions, which do not in the least affect the rights and privileges of others, and principles which do. The former may be broached and spread considerably, before any notice is taken of them. But the latter immediately set men upon exerting all the powers of resistance. Every effort would have been made by the Presbyters to prevent the execution of so daring a project; and considering the circumstances in which the Church was, before the establishment of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine, it was morally impossible for the Bishops to succeed in their foolish and wicked attempt. There is, therefore, no parallel between the two cases.

I think I might safely trust this reasoning with every impartial person. The difference between a principle which is perfectly harmless, and one that, when acted upon, is flagrantly unjust, sets the two cases at such an immense distance, that I am astonished at your bringing them to a point of comparison. But the unreasonableness of this mode of removing the difficulty need not have been insisted upon, for you have, by a single sentence, given up the point. Remember that the opponents of episcopacy cannot agree, whether it took its rise in the first, second, or third century, or even till some time in the fourth. But you say, 'It is certain that this corruption [infant communion] existed in the second century.' Here you fix the time; for I suppose you do not mean to carry it up to the first century, and make it an apostolical practice. Nor is it at all probable that it took its rise early in the second century, while numbers were living who had seen the Apostles administer the holy communion. We must, therefore, upon every ground of probability, place its beginning somewhere about the middle of the second century. Now, Sir, we do not tie you up in this manner. We do not ask you to give us a period of a few years, when all the Presbyterians in the world became Episcopalians; although we certainly have a right to call for the record of such a wonderful revolution. No, Sir, we will not confine you to so short a period as *fifty* years. You may take any entire century you please after the first; and

if we no not prove from indubitable records, that episcopacy existed before your given period, we are willing to give up the whole cause.

It seems then, that you can tell, within a few years, when infant communion began; but you request of us to allow you between two and three hundred years for the period, within which episcopacy made its appearance, and then you can very confidently assure us, that its birth happened within that short, very short space. This is very modest, and very consistent. A harmless opinion and practice, which could irritate—which could injure no one, can be traced within a few years of its birth; but a wonderful revolution, calculated to inflame the passions of thousands, and to produce in the Church the most violent convulsions, the most virulent animosities, is involved in such thick darkness, that it is impossible for the greatest antiquaries among the Presbyterians to tell us in what century this new form of government was given to the Church. The man who can believe this, needs not to pray that his faith may be strengthened.

You assert, Sir, very confidently, that infant communion was the practice of the Church in the second century; but, as *usual*, you talk without book. Who is your warrant for this assertion? You name none. On the contrary, I assert, that there is no authority to be produced earlier than St. Cyprian, about the middle of the third century. Bingham names that Prelate as the first who mentions it. Neither Tertullian, nor Clemens of Alexandria, nor Irenæus, nor Justin Martyr, say any thing about it. We have, therefore, no reason to think, that it was known in the Church till the third century. Here then the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis completely fails. *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, [That which has been held always, every where, and by all,] does not accord with infant communion; and, consequently, *it is not* of apostolic institution: but episcopacy has been proved to accord perfectly with these marks, and, therefore, *it is* of apostolic institution.

If episcopacy were merely a point *of opinion*, and not a *matter of fact*, which was calculated to inflame the passions, and produce animosity and contention, I should not think it reasonable to call upon our opponents to point out the time, even within half a century, when it took its rise. Opinions creep in the dark for some time, and are not immediately noticed; but great revolutions either in Church or state, are always the prominent objects of history. The historian seizes upon them with avidity, dwells upon them minutely, and paints them in strong and vivid colours. But the change from presbytery to episcopacy was conducted with all the silence of the grave; no historian recording it, no mortal perceiving it. Yet our opponents talk with as much confidence of a change, as if they could produce history, in abundance to warrant their assertion; as if they could give us the place *where*, or the year *when*, it made its

appearance. But when pressed upon this point, why then, to be sure, they beg to be excused; and gravely tell us, that there are certain *opinions*, and certain *practices*, the date of which cannot be ascertained; and this they think is a set-off to the difficulty of accounting for a change, which, in the circumstances of the primitive Church, was morally impossible.

But if the case of infant communion will not meet that of episcopacy, perhaps it may be met by the difficulty of assigning a period for the introduction of Metropolitans. Here, Sir, you will find no relief from your embarrassment. This case, if possible, is worse than the last. There is no difficulty in determining when Metropolitans were introduced into the Church. "That primacy commenced," says Dr. Cave,[a] "not long after the apostolic age, when sects and schisms broke in apace, and controversies multiplying between particular Bishops, it was found necessary to pitch upon one in every province, to whom the umpirage of cases might be referred, and by whom all common and public affairs might be directed." With this, as to time, Bingham agrees, adding—"Perhaps it [the office of Metropolitan] took its rise from that common respect and deference which was usually paid, by the rest of the Bishops, to the Bishop of the *civil* metropolis in every province; which, advancing into a custom, was afterwards made into a canon by the council of Nice."[b]

Bingham gives sufficient evidence of the rise of Metropolitans in the second century. He observes, that "Lyons, in France, was a metropolis in the civil account; and Irenæus, who was Bishop of it, is said to have the superintendency of the Gallican *Paræciæ*, or dioceses, as Eusebius words it. Philip, Bishop of Gortyna, in Crete, is styled by Dionysius of Corinth, Bishop of all the Cretian Churches. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, presided in council over all the Bishops of Asia; Palma, of Amastris, over the Bishops of Pontus; and Theophilus, of Cæsarea, with Narcissus of Jerusalem, over the rest of the Bishops of Palestine."

"It is true (continues Bingham) none of these are expressly called *Metropolitans;* for that name scarcely occurs in any ancient record before the council of Nice; but they were at first πρωτοι, and κεφαλοι, *chief Bishops*, and *heads* of the province, as the Apostolical Canon styles them. After ages gave them other names, as that of *Archbishops*, at Alexandria, and other places, till that name became appropriate to the Patriarchs."

Thus you see, Sir, there is not the least difficulty in determining when Primates, or Metropolitans, took their rise in the Christian Church; and, therefore, you cannot derive the least degree of relief from this quarter.

But, Sir, if it were even impossible to determine the century when Metropolitans first appeared in the Church, still there

a *Annals of Church Government*, p. 92.
b *Antiquities*, Vol. I. p. 185, 186, octavo edition.

would be no parallel between this difficulty, and the one relating to episcopacy. There was no *usurpation* of power (as you assert) by that order of Bishops. It was a *Presidency* perfectly natural, because expedient, nay, necessary. When, in the second century, Bishops were multiplied in consequence of the diffusion of Christianity, those who resided in the same province frequently met in council, for the purpose of regulating the affairs of their Churches. A council, for the sake of order, requires a president; and the election of that officer would most commonly fall upon the Bishop of the metropolis, who, from the wealth and number of his congregations, would naturally acquire (all other circumstances being equal) a superior degree of consequence. This was, in fact, the case; for we find, in the history of the Church, that the Bishops of Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, were the first Presidents, or Metropolitans, in the Christian Church. There was no usurpation in this; it was a matter of choice; a matter of necessity, after the provincial councils took their rise. We, therefore, hear no complaints about it in the second and third centuries; for what was the wish of all, could give offence to none.

Further, the metropolitical power, which was very *small, till* after the establishment of Christianity, did not deprive other Bishops of any rights belonging to their office; consequently, there was nothing to excite resentment and opposition. The Bishops retained in the highest degree, and most complete security, their right of ordaining and confirming, and their supremacy of jurisdiction within their dioceses. What then was there in this measure of expediency, which can, without a prostitution of language, be called usurpation? Or what kind of parallel can there be between the rise of Metropolitans, and the rise of episcopacy, when the time of the former *can* be named, and the reasons of the appointment assigned; and when the time of the latter *cannot* be named, and no reason, no motive which influences the human mind can be assigned?—Surely none.

And here, I would just remark by the way, that this appointment of Metropolitans, or *Primi inter pares*, [chiefs among equals] is a convincing proof of the existence of Bishops at that time; not *congregational*, but *diocesan* Bishops; for those standing Presidents convoked none but Bishops to meet in councils; and Presbyters were excluded from them as *members;* unless perhaps they happened to represent their absent Bishops.

But, Sir, although you have been extremely unfortunate in adducing these two instances to get rid of a pressing difficulty, yet perhaps your next instance will serve you better. You inform us that, 'closely connected with the introduction of Archbishops, and other grades in the episcopal office, is the rise and progress of the *Papacy*. It is certain, that the anti-christian claims of the Bishop of Rome were begun before the close of the second century. The writings of Irenæus and Tertul-

lian both furnish abundant evidence of this fact. Yet, the records of antiquity give so little information respecting the various steps by which this *man of sin* rose to the possession of his power; they contain so little evidence of any efficient opposition to his claims, and represent the submission of the other Bishops as being so early and general, that the Papists attempt, from these circumstances, to prove the divine origin of their system.'

Here is, I think, abundance of error; but happily it will not take many pages to expose it.

In order to understand one another upon this point, I would ask, what do you mean by the *Papacy?* Do you mean the temporal power of the Pope, or his claim of universal supremacy over the Christian Church? I presume it is the latter; because the former is not peculiar to the Pope; many Bishops holding with their ecclesiastical, princely powers. It seems, then, according to your statement, that we do not know when this claim of supremacy was first advanced, and when it was first allowed. I cannot acquiesce in this. I find no difficulty at all in determining these points. Boniface the third, in the seventh century, was the first Bishop of Rome who claimed the title of *æcumenical*, or *universal Bishop.*[c] This title was indeed claimed but a few years before, by John, Bishop of Constantinople. This arrogance was resented by Gregory the Great, who was contemporary with John, in the most marked terms of reprobation. He says, that whoever arrogates to himself this title, outstrips Anti-christ.[d] Here then is positive proof, that the claim of supremacy was not known in the Christian Church till the seventh century. Thus, Sir, we have settled one point; the other is, to determine when this claim was granted, and carried into effect. And this point is as easily settled as the former. The cruel usurper, Phocas, who murdered his master, Mauritius, granted this title to Boniface. Soon after the Pope began to carry into effect this *supremacy.* He convened a synod of seventy-two Bishops, thirty Presbyters, and three Deacons, who decreed that no election of a Bishop should be deemed legal, unless ratified by the Pope in these words—*Sic volumus et jubemus,*[e] [Thus we will and command.]

There is not, before the seventh century, the least trace of any system of policy in the Holy See to establish its claim of superiority over other Bishops. There was, indeed, in the time of Cyprian, an undue stretch of power by Stephen, Bishop of Rome; but it was treated with the utmost contempt by the other Bishops, and particularly by Cyprian, who, on that occasion,

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c BARONIUS, *Annal. Eccles.* Vol. VIII. p. 198. ANASTASIUS *De Vitis Pont. Rom.* Vol. I. p. 117, and MOSHEIM.

d *Ego audentem fidenter dico, quod quisquis se universalem sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat, in elatione sua, anti christum præcurrit, quia superbiendo se cæteris præponit.* GREG. MAG. *Opp.* l. vi. Ep. 30.

e PLATINA, p. 60. *Vitæ Pontific.*

declared, "there is no Bishop of Bishops" in CHRIST's Church. But any thing like Papal supremacy was not known till the period which I have assigned to it.

The famous forgery of the donation of Italy to Pope Sylvester, by Constantine the Great, forms another remarkable epoch in the history of Papal usurpation. This forgery, which contributed so much to the extension of the power of the *man of sin*, was never suspected till the twelfth century, when a hint to that purpose was dropped in a Sabine monastery. But it was left for the bold and masterly pen of Laurentius Valla to unmask the imposture, and expose it to the world in all its deformity. To this forgery the Popes owed much of their civil authority, and as that increased, their ecclesiastical power increased with it.

It would extend the discussion upon this point to too great a length, were I to go on marking the several epochs of the increasing power of the Popes; but this has been done by so many able writers, that whoever wishes to be well informed upon this subject, can be at no loss for sources of information. Enough has been said to disprove your assertion, that we know not the time when the papacy came into being. Nay, Sir, we know the time when all the leading errors of the Church of Rome were broached. The present subject does not require me to enter upon a detail of this kind; but I stand ready to do it whenever it shall become necessary.

You inform us, Sir, that 'the anti-christian claims of the Bishop of Rome were begun before the close of the second century;' and that 'the writings of Irenæus and Tertullian furnish abundant evidence of the fact.' This, Sir, is very vague. You should have informed us what you mean by 'anti-christian claims.' It may be true, and yet amount to very little. I believe I could give proof enough of other Bishops doing the same thing; and what is more, I can give abundant proof, that Presbyters and Deacons, and even laymen, asserted 'anti-christian claims.' But that the Bishop of Rome claimed, in the second century, supremacy over all other Bishops, I utterly deny, and call upon you to give us the proof. On the contrary, it is a notorious fact, that the Church of Rome was, for the first three centuries, as pure as any Church then upon earth. She maintained in a high degree, *the unity of the faith, in the bond of peace.*

Neither, Sir, have you given us any quotations from the above named fathers. Perhaps that would have entirely spoiled your assertion. We should have then known the extent of those 'anti-christian claims.' Your intimation of something like Papacy might then appear to be *nothing* like it; and that would have entirely defeated the policy, which just gives a glimpse of something wrong, and leaves it to the reader's imagination to make out the worst. This will do very well in some species of composition; but in 'Letters,' which profess to give a correct view of the Christian Church, such management is very censurable.

At the time that you committed to paper the assertion, that 'the anti-christian claims of the Bishop of Rome were begun before the close of the second century,' I wonder, Sir, that you did not perceive that you were destroying your own hypothesis. You say, it is as difficult to trace the rise and progress of papacy as of episcopacy. Yet, you assure us, that the former took its rise in the second century, and your authorities for this assertion are Irenæus and Tertullian. But neither you nor any body else, can tell us the century when episcopacy began; and yet, it seems, that being *able* to ascertain the one, and *unable* to ascertain the other, amounts precisely to the same thing. Happy inconsistency, which affords a man such decisive proof!

Another unlucky circumstance attends you, Sir. You name authorities for the rise of papacy; but no mortal ever yet attempted to produce one writer who says, that episcopacy took its rise in any age short of the apostolic. Yet, no doubt, this important *difference* makes the two cases perfectly *similar*.

Enough has now been said to show, that the rise and progress of popery can, in every thing material, be easily traced; but the rise of episcopacy, upon Presbyterian principles, still remains involved in impenetrable darkness. Not one ray of light has as yet been thrown upon this point, by the ablest advocates of parity. This is evident from their being so completely at variance among themselves, when they attempt to assign any period of time for the birth of episcopacy. This could never be the case, were there any footsteps of *parity* in the primitive Church.

You go on, Sir, to other examples, in the same inconsequential manner. You say, 'Scarcely less remarkable, or in itself improbable, was the change which early took place in the mode of *electing* and *installing* the pastors of the Church. You have been informed, in the preceding parts of this work, that, as each Bishop, in the primitive Church, was the pastor of a single congregation, so every Bishop was elected by *the people* of his charge, and ordained to the work of the ministry *in their presence*. It is certain, however, that at least as early as the fourth century, this power of electing their own Bishops began to be gradually taken away from the people; and that, in the course of two or three centuries afterwards, the privilege was almost wholly withdrawn from them. But how came a right so popular, and so highly prized, to be tamely surrendered? And why is it that the records of antiquity furnish so little information on this subject?' &c.[f]

Here is a great deal said, but nothing proved. You take it for granted, that the people elected their Bishops for the first three centuries. But would it not, Sir, be better to prove this by competent testimony? What evidence is there that, in the first century, Bishops or Presbyters were elected by the people? None at all. On the contrary, it is evident from the New Testa-

f *Letters.* Page 299.

ment, that they were elected by the Apostles, and that the people had no voice in the business. There is not a single instance that can be produced in opposition to this assertion. Does Clemens Romanus intimate that the people elected Bishops? Quite the contrary, as you very well know. He expressly asserts, that Bishops and Deacons were designated by the HOLY SPIRIT for their respective offices. Does Barnabas countenance your assertion? He has not a syllable upon the subject. Does Hermas? He also is silent. Does Ignatius? Very far from it. Does Justin Martyr, or Irenæus, or Tertullian, or Clemens of Alexandria? No testimony ever *has* been, or *can* be produced to this purpose. Here, then, are two centuries, from which not a tittle can be drawn to countenance your assertion. But perhaps the third century will furnish you with sufficient evidence of this fact. But what, Sir, if it should? That would not prove, that the people elected their Bishops in the first and second centuries. In the first, as we have seen, there is positive evidence *against* it; and in the second, there is no evidence *for* it. Well then, if this practice began in the third century (for we have no right to say that it began sooner) and was abolished in the fourth, as you intimate, we have a period assigned for its rise, its progress, and its abolition. Consequently, this is not a case that will serve for an offset to the difficulty of accounting for the rise of episcopacy.

Were I, Sir, to rest the matter here, it would completely defeat your view, in asserting that Bishops were elected by the people till the fourth century. But I will give you one passage from St. Cyprian, which shows what was the general practice of the African Churches in electing a Bishop. In his sixty-eighth epistle he says, "It is the custom throughout almost all the provinces, for the neighbouring Bishops to meet together, and *choose* a Bishop *in the presence* of the people, who know his life and conversation; which was done at the ordination of Sabinus, Bishop of Emerita, in Spain, who was ordained to that dignity by the suffrage of the people, and the decision or judgment of the Bishops"—*Quod factum videmus in Sabini ordinatione ut de universæ fraternitatis suffragio, et de Episcoporum judicio episcopatus ei deferretur.* Cyprian generally uses the word *suffrage* for *approbation, liking;* but not for *polling*, or *voting*. Of this I will give two instances out of many which might be quoted. In his tract *De Zelo et Livore*, he says, when the people saw David slay Goliah, "they broke forth into praises of David with suffrage of applause." There certainly was no voting on that occasion. In his treatise *De Vanitate Idolorum*, he says, that the Jews delivered up our SAVIOUR to Pontius Pilate, "requesting his death by violent and pertinacious suffrages"—*Mortem suffragiis violentis et pertinacibus flagitantes.* This expresses the violent desire of the Jews to see JESUS put to death, but no more than desire, and approbation; for they had at that time, no power to put any man to death. If you wish to

see instances of this kind multiplied, and the point clearly proved, that the people had nothing to do with the election of a Bishop, but barely gave their testimony to his character, please to consult Slater's *Original Draught*, and Sage's *Cyprianic Age vindicated.*

Let me also remind you, Sir, of St. Jerome's testimony to this point. "At Alexandria, (says he,) from Mark the Evangelist to Heraclas and Dionysius' episcopate, (that is, in the third century,) the *Presbyters* always nominated one their Bishop, chosen from among themselves."

It appears then from the New Testament, that the people did not claim any right to elect their Bishops, but that the Apostles always nominated them, as St. Paul did Timothy and Titus; and from Clemens Romanus, that the Apostles went through cities and regions ordaining Bishops, who were designated by the HOLY GHOST. And it does not appear from any records of the second century, that the people ever exercised or claimed that right. It also appears from Cyprian and Jerome, that the elections were conducted in a different manner, in the third century. About the close of this century, I believe, the people of Rome acquired great influence in the election of their Bishops; but they exercised it in such a tumultuous and scandalous manner, that Constantine, after he became a Christian, found it necessary to prevent them from interfering in elections. As there was no rule prescribed by the Apostles, with respect to elections, there was some diversity of practice in different Churches; but that Bishops, and Presbyters, and Deacons, were elected by the people in the first three centuries, is very far from being correct. This case, therefore, is totally irrelevant to the point you wish to establish.

Further: If it were even as you say, that the people elected their Bishops till the fourth century, how in the name of common sense, can this be considered as presenting a difficulty equal to that of accounting for the rise of episcopacy? How do you know, Sir, that the people elected their Bishops? It must be, if at all, from records. Here then the cases are totally dissimilar. You consider the evidence for the people's electing their Bishops clear enough; but with respect to episcopacy, you acknowledge that its birth cannot be traced. And with respect to the abolition of popular election, you say it began to take place in the fourth century. So then, a thing which is clear, is as difficult to be known as that which is involved in midnight darkness. Pray, Sir, what do you call this?

As to the difficulty of accounting for the people's so 'tamely surrendering a right so highly prized,' which you seem to think equal to the difficulty of accounting for the Presbyters resigning the power of ordination, you should first have proved that the Christian laity generally exercised that right, as you are pleased to call it; but if you *had* proved it, still the two cases would be totally dissimilar; for whenever popular elections were abo-

lished, it was done by the *civil power*, which the people could not resist; but no Presbyterian writer has ever hinted, that the right of ordination was taken from the Presbyters by the *civil* authority. The exercise of that right almost all our opponents acknowledge, ceased long before the conversion of Constantine. The difficulty then still continues in full force against you.

The next thing you mention as presenting a difficulty equal to the rise of episcopacy, is the abolition of the office of *Ruling Elder*. I flatter myself that I have fully proved, in my eighth letter, that there never was any such officer in the Christian Church, till the time of Calvin. That it is a mere human institution, a great part, if not the greater part of Presbyterians themselves acknowledge; and that nine tenths of the Christian world are against the office, is beyond all controversy. You must, Sir, have very strong reinforcements, to be able to stand your ground upon this point.

Your list of difficulties increases fast upon us. You gravely inform us, that we cannot tell when Sub-deacons, Acolyths, and Exorcists were introduced into the church; and your inference from this must be, that we ought not to urge the difficulty of accounting for the rise of episcopacy, when we cannot ascertain the time when these *dignified* officers were first created.

Upon reading this, the correctness of Lord Kaimes' definition of the *ridiculous*, forcibly struck me. He says, it is that "which excites laughter blended with contempt."[g] *Sub-deacons*, *Acolyths*, and *Exorcists!* Why did you not add, *Sextons*, *Porters*, *Bell-ringers*, and *Grave-diggers?* Surely Sir, you must take your readers for children, when you suppose that they will believe, that the introduction of the first named officers was 'calculated to interest the feelings both of the clergy and of the people, and to excite long and violent opposition from various quarters.' What was there in the office of a *Sub-deacon* to excite opposition? That officer prepared the sacred vessels and utensils of the altar, and delivered them to the Deacons in time of divine service. He attended the church doors during the time of the communion service; and he went on the Bishop's embassies, with his letters to foreign Churches. Was this an office of so much consequence, as to excite commotions in the Church, upon its introduction? No one can seriously say, it was.

The *Acolyths* were an order peculiar to the Latin Church, and quite unknown to the Greek for four hundred years. It appears from a canon in the fourth council of Carthage, that their office was to light the candles, snuff them, furnish the wine for the sacrament, and attend the Bishop. Do you seriously think, Sir, that appointing candle snuffers was calculated to produce commotion in the Church? Sir, I am ashamed of this; it is really too bad; far, far too low and ridiculous to come from your pen,

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g *Elements of Criticism*, Vol. I. p. 221.

Exorcists began with Christianity itself. In the apostolic age, all orders of the clergy, and even laymen cast out devils, and this continued to be the case till miracles ceased, which was not till the persecutions of the Christians ceased. This has been abundantly proved by several writers. When this miraculous power of casting out devils ceased, which was at different times in different situations, the order of Exorcists was instituted, and this we know was about the middle of the third century; for Cyprian mentions this order, and I cannot find any before him that does. The duties of this office were to pray, both in private and public, for the *Energumens*, or those who were supposed to be possessed of the devil, to keep them always employed in some innocent business, and to see them provided with daily food. This was a humane office; but it was strongly tinctured with superstition.—All these inferior orders are found in the Church in the third century.

When a writer can prevail on himself to give the most distant hint, that the difficulty of determining the time when these petty, servile offices were introduced into the Church (even if that were true) is as great as the difficulty of determining the æra of episcopacy, it must excite strong suspicion, that all is not right in some quarter or other.

In reviewing your eighth letter, I have thought it best to settle this point, although not in the order you observe, before I consider whether it was morally possible for so great a revolution to take place in so short a time; and whether, if it were, we should not have some notice of it in the records of the Church. Let us give these points a fair discussion.

The point of time that I shall take for this supposed revolution, is the middle of the second century, because I am warranted by the concessions of your ablest writers to do so. The Assembly of Presbyterian divines in their *Jus Divinum Minister. Anglic.* p. 104, have this question,—"How long was it, that the Church of CHRIST was governed by the common council of Presbyters, without a Bishop set over them? A. Dr. Blondel, a man of great reading and learning, undertakes, in a long discourse, to make out that before the year 140, there was not a Bishop over Presbyters." This gives us the opinion of the English Presbyterian divines, and it differs very materially from yours, as to the point of time when episcopacy is supposed to have been introduced. Chamier, a Protestant divine of the French Church, says, that "inequality (of Bishops and Presbyters) was very ancient, and near the times of the Apostles. Nay, that it took place, the first age having *not yet*, or *scarcely* elapsed."[h] Now one of the Apostles, St. John, out-lived the first age, dying at Ephesus, A. D. 101. Salmasius says in his book called *Walo Messalinus*, chap. iv. "About the beginning,

h Inæqualitem esse vetustissimam ac vicinam Apostolorum temporibus. Aut non dum elapso, aut vix elapso primo sæculo.

or middle of the second age, the first Bishops were placed over the Presbytery." Another divine of the same Church, Du Moulin, candidly acknowledges, that "episcopacy was an apostolic institution, and whatever name we may give Timothy and Titus, whether that of Bishops or Evangelists, it is manifest that they had episcopal successors, who enjoyed their pre-eminence."[i] Bucer, a divine of the Swiss Church, acknowledges that, "even in the times of the Apostles themselves, one of the Presbyters was chosen and ordained to be a guide, and, as it were, a Prelate, who went before all the rest, and had the care of souls, and administered the episcopal office, chiefly and in the highest degree."[k] With Bucer agrees Calvin, in his comment on Titus i. 5. "At that time (of Timothy) there was no *equality* among the ministers of the church, but some one in authority and council had the pre-eminence."[l] Baxter, Le Clerc, and Doddridge, have been already quoted; the two former, as placing the rise of episcopacy in the apostolic age; the latter, as placing it in the time of Ignatius.

From the concessions of these learned men, I proceed to demonstrate the moral impossibility of a change from presbytery to episcopacy, during the second age of the Church, when the civil arm was stretched out, not to defend, but to destroy the religion of CHRIST.

It is, Sir, your own acknowledgment, that the Church continued pure till the middle of the second century. If, then, the change took place while the clergy and people were in a state of purity, you will have a hard task indeed, to reconcile a daring and wicked usurpation with pure and virtuous motives. You will perhaps say, that you do not attempt to reconcile them; but, on the contrary, that you ascribe the innovation to a wicked ambition, which operated so powerfully in the beginning of the fourth, or at most, towards the close of the third century, as to give a new face to the Christian Church. But let our readers consider the great weight of evidence I have produced from the writings of the third century, to prove that episcopacy existed before that age; and to that, let them add the acknowledgments of many of our ablest opponents, that the fact is incontestible, and then I ask, whether I am not sufficiently warranted to take my ground in the middle of the second century? I certainly am, and shall accordingly build my reasoning upon this concession.

It is a maxim in moral science, that no man acts, or *can* act, without a motive. Now, what is the motive that influenced a few of the Presbyters to attempt an assumption of superiority over their brethren? Was it a desire of temporal power? That was entirely out of the question, without the aid of civil authority,

i Ordinem episcopalem esse juris Apostolici, &c.
k Lib. *de anima cura interscripsit.* Ang. p. 380.
l Non eam fuisse tunc æqualitatem inter Ecclesiæ ministros, quin unus aliquis authoritate et consilio præsset.

And every one knows, that kind of authority was exerted for the destruction of the Church. Was it the love of wealth? None resulted from the acquisition, or *could* result from it. The people were generally poor, and the Bishops, as well as the Presbyters and Deacons, were maintained out of the offerings at the altar; and scanty was the fare that proceeded from that source. Was it the love of ease and security? That could not be; for episcopal superiority greatly increased the labours of the Bishops, and exposed them to almost certain destruction. "As soon (says Bishop Skinner) as an edict passed for persecuting the Christians in any part of the Church, the Bishops were immediately aimed at, as the most guilty persons, and the first that were exposed to the fury of their persecutors. As their danger was thus imminent, their labour too was often no less severe; for upon them was laid the principal care of the flock, which frequently required the greatest vigilance and attention in the shepherd."[m] If, then, neither dominion, nor wealth, nor ease, nor security, could possibly be the motive for so daring an attempt, as to deprive the Presbyters of their most sacred rights, those ambitious spirits, as you deem them, must have acted without any motive, which is evidently inconsistent with the very nature and constitution of the human mind.

You seem, Sir, to rest your plausible theory upon the desire of pre-eminence, which, you say very justly, is natural to man. You need not have quoted any instances from Scripture to prove this. It is universally acknowledged—universally felt. But what sort of pre-eminence is it that man so much pants after? Is it temporal pre-eminence, that is attended with power, and wealth, and splendour? Or is it spiritual pre-eminence, which, in the early ages of the Church, brought to the possessor none of these things; but on the contrary, brought with it increased labour, and almost certain destruction? No one can be at a loss to determine which. A little, brief, spiritual authority, generally accompanied with bonds, and imprisonment, and death, in the most horrible forms, has very few charms, even to those in whose breasts the love of power operates strongly. No, Sir, it is the love of *temporal* pre-eminence which so universally actuates human nature; which gratifies so highly the pride of man. This was the kind of pre-eminence which the sons of Zebedee requested from the hands of their master. They had not, at the time they made this request, the most distant conception of the *spiritual* nature of CHRIST's kingdom. They supposed that he was to be a *temporal* prince, and that his kingdom was to be altogether *of this world.* Hence their *strife which of them should be accounted the greatest.* Had they known that CHRIST's kingdom was *not to be of this world*, we should not have heard of any strife for that pre-eminence, which brought with it greater labour, and exposed to greater sufferings. So dif-

m *Answer to Dr. Campbell's Lectures*, p. 240, Sword's edit.

ferent was the pre-eminence which the Apostles had in view, and that which was acquired by the first Bishops! The one is at all times gratifying to human nature; the other, under such circumstances as have been mentioned, always forbidding and repulsive. "It would be the height of folly to suppose that any Presbyters, however inordinate their ambition, would seek distinction on the rack and at the stake, would usurp stations where relentless persecution would inevitably assail them."[n] No; human nature loves itself too well for that kind of distinction. A wish for pre-eminence is natural, when it brings its usual gratifications; but where is the man that wishes it, when it brings in its train every thing appalling to human nature?

When we thus examine the constitution of the human mind, and perceive from our own constant and invariable experience, that man cannot possibly act without motives; and when we take a view of the circumstances of the primitive Church, which, for three ages, was harassed and tormented with bloody persecutions, it appears to me impossible, to name any thing like a motive to attempt the usurpation of episcopal power. Even to *fancy*, a motive is not very obvious; but if it were, men of understanding will not indulge fancy at the expense of common sense.

But this, Sir, although enough, is not all. You acknowledge, that the Church, till the middle of the second century, preserved her purity. How then, consistently with this state of things, could a few of her Presbyters have devised the wicked project of depriving their brethren of their most sacred rights? Surely, men of such distinguished virtue and piety as the Bishops of that period are universally acknowledged to have been, could not have entertained a thought so inconsistent with a pure conscience, with peace of mind, and with the hope of future happiness. Could men, who displayed all the meekness and humility of Christians, have attempted a plan of domination so completely at variance with these virtues? Could men, who endured every thing for the sake of CHRIST, violate his sacred institution? Could men, who, to save themselves from the most excruciating torments, would not offer incense at the idol altars, deliberately associate for the purpose of acquiring a trifling authority over their brethren? What! *conscientious* in every thing relating to Christian purity, to Christian manners; and yet *profligate* as to the constitution of the Christian Church! Gross inconsistency! Palpable contradiction! No, Sir. If there are any fixed principles in human nature, any motive of human actions, any desire of self-preservation, any regard to consistency of character, any fear of a guilty conscience, any dread of future misery; the first Bishops were not *usurpers*, but *the true and legitimate possessors of Apostolical pre-eminence.*

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n HOBART'S *Apology*, p. 208. This book ought to be in the hands of every churchman. It contains abundant proof of the divine origin of episcopacy.

Further still. Supposing this chimerical plan of depriving the Presbyters of those powers to which they were entitled by the appointment of their LORD and Master, should have entered into the minds of a few ambitious Presbyters, how, in the name of common sense, was it to be effected? They had not the civil authority to aid them. Was it done by the power of eloquence? Did Cicero and Demosthenes ever persuade men out of their senses? Was it possible for the few usurpers to persuade the Presbyters, and Deacons, and people, that CHRIST left his Church under an episcopal government, but that by some leger-demain it was changed into a Presbyterian, and that, therefore, it was a duty to revive the primitive institution? I acknowledge that these are silly questions; but I shelter myself under the silliness of the hypothesis which obliges me to ask them. If you answer in the affirmative, they are silly to excess; but if in the negative, they are pertinent and conclusive.

We have now got a step farther. The first Bishops had no conceivable motives for usurping ecclesiastical superiority, and they were too virtuous and pious to attempt it; but, if they had attempted it, there was no possibility of effecting it.

The latter assertions will appear with still brighter evidence, if possible, from the following observations.

The clergy and people of the second century, when this extraordinary revolution is supposed to have taken place, knew as well under what government the Apostles left the Church, as you or I do what was the government of our respective Churches a hundred years ago. There was not any possibility of mistake, or of doubt, about the matter. Well, then, what could have induced the clergy and people to submit to an alteration? There must have been some reason for it. What was it? Were they bought by the first Bishops? Poor men! their office afforded them but a scanty income for themselves and their families. Were they over-reached by subtle arts, and outwitted by superior talents? So you seem to think. You inform us, 'that the nations over which the Christian religion was spread with so much rapidity, were sunk in deplorable ignorance. Grossly illiterate, very few were able to read; and even to these few, manuscripts were of difficult access. At that period, popular eloquence was the great engine of persuasion; and where the character of the mind is not fixed by reading, and a consequent habit of attentive and accurate thinking, it is impossible to say how deeply and suddenly it may be operated upon by such an engine. A people of this description, wholly unaccustomed to speculations and government; universally subjected to despotic rule in the state; having no just ideas of religious liberty; altogether unfurnished with the means of communicating and uniting with each other, which the art of printing has since afforded; torn with dissensions among themselves, and liable to be *turned about with every wind of doctrine;* such a people could offer

little resistance to those who were ambitious of ecclesiastical power.'[o]

This, Sir, is all very fine; and to those who know no better, I suppose very instructive and convincing. But, Sir, if it were even true, it would no more account for the revolution from presbytery to episcopacy, than for the revolution of the heavenly bodies. Does it require literature and science, to enable men to determine under what kind of government they have always lived? In the *state*, is it necessary for men to be philosophers and cultivators of the arts, in order to determine whether they live under a kingly or republican form of government? In the *Church*, cannot they tell whether they are governed by Bishops, or by Presbyters, acting with equal authority, unless they are learned? Ought they not to confide in what they every day see and hear, unless they are acquainted with philosophy, and mathematics, and political science? Surely, Sir, if the clergy and people were ignorant and unenlightened by literature, still they did not lose their senses, and their understandings! If they were unacquainted with books, still they must have been well acquainted with the official characters of those, who, in *spirituals*, ruled over them. Here there was no possibility of any mistake. A few learned men could never have made them believe, that the Church had not always been presbyterian, when thousands of them must have been born in the apostolic age, and have been children of the earliest converts of Christianity. If presbytery had been the institution of the Apostles, all the Christians of the second century knew it well, and no eloquence could ever have persuaded them to the contrary. Nay, Sir, if they were even as ignorant as you represent them, and much more so, this very circumstance would have made them more tenacious of what they deemed sacred institutions. The history of mankind evinces, that ignorance and obstinacy are generally united. The most illiterate and unpolished nations are the most inveterate in their resentment against those who attempt to deprive them of any thing connected with religion. And, on the other hand, the more learned and scientific a nation is, the more speculative and projecting it is. In the eyes of such a people, old institutions are less venerable than in the eyes of an unenlightened people. New things captivate because they are considered as proofs of genius; and old things tire and disgust, because they check genius, and circumscribe talents. The ignorance, then, which you ascribe to the early ages of Christianity, were you even perfectly correct in what you say, instead of diminishing, would increase the difficulties which attend a supposition of a change of government.

But, Sir, whatever may become of this reasoning, whether it be thought conclusive or not, it is very certain that you have given your readers a very fanciful picture of the second and

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third centuries. Literature was not so low, nor ignorance so prevalent, as you represent it. Eloquence and poetry had indeed declined in Greece and Rome; but still literature and philosophy were far from being extinguished. The second and third centuries furnished several good writers in the Christian Church—Tertullian, Arnobius, Irenæus, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, and several others. We meet with no complaint of a want of knowledge in those ages, nor for several ages following. There was quite sufficient for every religious purpose, and for preserving *the unity of the faith in the bond of peace.*

Nor was the second century, in which your best writers *fancy* episcopacy was introduced, in any degree distinguished for contention and schism, as you assert. Perhaps there never was a more peaceable period of the Christian Church. I do not recollect a single controversy that produced any mischievous effects. The dispute about the time of keeping Easter was the only one of any moment; and that was conducted without violence, and without schism. Both parties retained their own custom till the council of Nice, which happily terminated the dispute.

And here let me make an observation, which, I think, ought to carry conviction to every mind. If the eastern and western Churches were so tenacious of such an unessential point as the time of keeping a festival, that neither would yield to the other, how is it possible to suppose, that all the clergy and people throughout the Christian world would have quietly submitted to an alteration of that sacred regimen, which CHRIST had established in his Church? And, further, how is it possible to suppose, that when we have so minute an account of this controversy, which in itself was of no material consequence, we should not have one single testimony in all antiquity, that the Church was changed from a presbyterian to an episcopal regimen? This is a wonderful circumstance. In the second and third centuries we have detailed accounts of the progress of heresies, of schisms, of disputes between Bishops, and between Presbyters and Bishops; but not the least hint of a change which deprived the Presbyters of their most sacred rights, and which, therefore, was calculated to produce the most violent convulsions throughout the Christian world. Sir, I could as easily believe all the fictions of the *Arabian Night's Entertainments*, of *Don Quixotte*, of *Gulliver's Travels*, of *Amadis of Gaul*, as believe this story. It is incredible—it is unreasonable. Yet it seems any account of the matter will do, when a hypothesis is to be served; when those passions are to be consulted which always entwine themselves with principles once avowed, and with interests once established.

Let us now see how you surmount all these difficulties. The consideration of this point shall occupy the first part of my next letter.

LETTER XIX.

REV. SIR:

YOUR manner of accounting for the silence of the primitive writers with respect to a revolution in the government of the Christian Church, is as follows: 'Nor is it wonderful that we find so little said concerning those usurpations in the early records of antiquity. There was probably but little written on the subject; since those who were most ambitious to shine as writers, were most likely to be forward in making unscriptural claims themselves; and, of course, would be little disposed to record their own shame. It is likewise probable, that the little that was written on such a subject would be lost; because the art of printing being unknown, and the trouble and expense of multiplying copies being only incurred for the sake of possessing *interesting* and *popular* works, it was not to be expected that writings so hostile to the ambition and vices of the clergy would be much read, if it were possible to suppress them. And when to these circumstances we add, that literature, after the fourth century, was chiefly in the hands of ecclesiastics; that many important works written in the three first centuries, are known to be lost; and that of the few which remain, some are acknowledged on all hands to have been grossly corrupted, and radically mutilated, we cannot wonder that so little in explanation of the various steps of clerical usurpation has reached our times.'[a]

It seems, then, from this account, that we are not to look for any records of this wonderful usurpation; because those who were the most capable of writing, would be the very men who would most probably have usurped episcopal pre-eminence; and they would not, you think, record their own shame. But were there none who were capable of writing, but the comparatively small number of usurping Bishops? Was the eloquent Tertullian one of the usurpers? Has not he left various writings? Has he given any hint about this anti-christian usurpation? Would he have 'recorded his own shame' by so doing? Nay, Sir, has not this Presbyter, who had every motive to brand with infamy these usurpers, declared in the most explicit terms, that all spiritual power is derived from episcopal ordination? That neither Presbyter nor Deacon has a right to baptize without the Bishop's authority? Does not he challenge the heretics to produce a list of their Bishops from the Apostles, as the Catholics could? What could have induced Tertullian to be silent with respect to this usurpation, if it had ever existed? Or rather, what could have induced him to assert such a shameless falsehood, as that episcopacy was of apostolical institution, if it was not a notorious fact? What also could have induced the learned

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Clemens of Alexandria to be silent upon this point? Was he one of the usurping Bishops? Would he have 'recorded his own shame' by lifting up his voice against the usurpation? Or rather, would he not have been highly culpable, if he had been silent? But we hear no remonstrance from him. On the contrary, we find him declaring that the Apostles left three orders in the Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. We have the same testimony from the profoundly learned Origen. He also was but a Presbyter; and therefore, one of the sufferers under this unchristian domination. He had, too, a peculiar motive for unmasking the imposition. He conceived himself to have been ill treated by his Bishop. Yet, irritated as he was, he declares episcopacy to be of divine appointment. Did he not know how the matter was? Was he an idiot, or a knave? Was he afraid to tell the truth, or had he any motive for telling a lie? Surely, Sir, we have got to a strange pass, when such monstrous fictions are imposed upon mankind!

But why are the Christian Bishops to be excluded from bearing their testimony to episcopacy? Oh! 'they were the usurpers, and of course could not record their own shame.' Was Ignatius a usurper? Does the man who had been forty years Bishop of Antioch, who had been ordained to that office by apostolic imposition of hands, and who encountered for the sake of CHRIST, death in one of its most horrible forms, deserve that character? Did he, virtuous and pious as he was, go out of the world with a lie in his mouth? Did this martyr, who declares over and over again, that the office which he bore was of divine institution, 'record his own shame?' Was Polycarp, the venerable and pious Bishop of Smyrna, one of those usurping Prelates? He must have had a principal hand in the business, if Blondel and the Westminster divines have *guessed* right; for he lived at the very time when, they say, this flagitious revolution was effected. Was this distinguished character, who recommended in strong terms the epistles of Ignatius, in which the divine right of episcopacy is repeatedly asserted, and who, from recommending them, must have been of the same opinion; was, I say, Polycarp one of those 'usurpers'? Did he go out of the world, triumphing in the flames, and exulting in the hope of happiness, when he had upon his soul the guilt of destroying that sacred regimen which CHRIST left in his Church? Was he tenacious of the time of keeping Easter, which was of no material consequence; but regardless of the constitution of the Christian Church? If these questions will admit of an answer in the affirmative, then the nature of man is totally different from what it was in the early ages of the Church. At that time, *great events* were not recorded, while the *most insignificant* were. At that time, revolutions were effected by *simple volition;* but ever since, they have required *vigorous action. Then* the government of the Church was subverted without the least notice, noise, or contention; but *now* it would excite the great-

est commotions, and most virulent animosities. In *that age*, men loved misery; but *now* they abhor it. *Then* art and intrigue possessed magical power, and were irresistible; *now*, their influence may be effectually counteracted. In short, a total revolution has taken place in the human mind, as well as in the Church. Its principles, its motives, its feelings, its powers, have undergone a complete change.

Surely, Sir, I need not go on naming other distinguished lights of the Church in the second and third centuries. I need not say any thing about Hegesippus, and Justin Martyr, and Melito, and Polycrates, and Theophilus, and Irenæus, and several others in the second century; and Miltiades, and Minutius Felix, and Alexander of Jerusalem, and Cyprian, and Cornelius, and many more in the third century; several of whom left writings behind them, in which there is not a tittle about a change of government; and all of them were men of distinguished piety, eminent virtue, and respectable talents. To talk of these men being either usurpers themselves, or encouragers of usurpation, either by word or deed, in others; or of even keeping silence during its progress, or after it took place, is such an outrage committed upon probability, that it is inconceivable to me how any one can possibly be guilty of it. Yet such is the fact, that you are guilty of it, whether it can be accounted for, or not.

You go on, Sir, in the same unvaried strain of conjecture and fancy. You think it 'probable that the little that was written on such a subject, [a change of government,] would be lost; because the art of printing being unknown, and the trouble and expense of multiplying copies being only incurred for the sake of possessing *interesting* and *popular* works, it was not to be expected that writings so hostile to the ambitious views of the clergy, would be much read, if it were possible to suppress them.' It seems, then, that you know, or at least think it probable, that in several works which are lost, there was some account of this revolution. Was there ever such an argument as this from a man who wishes to be deemed a reasoner! At this rate, what is to become of the best attested facts? A sceptic has nothing to do but to say, 'it is probable that the little that was written' in opposition to those facts, is lost; but if we had those writings, it is very likely that we should have a very different story. Or if the art of printing had been known, it is very probable that those books which contradict the alleged facts, would have been so much multiplied as to preclude their total destruction, and then those pretended facts would appear gross impositions. What a *sweeping* way of reasoning is this! Might not the Deists, at this rate, argue against the Gospel history, that 'perhaps there were accounts published concerning our blessed SAVIOUR by good hands, directly contrary to those in the Gospels now extant, although they are entirely lost, as many books of the adversaries of Christianity are known to be?' And how easily may they argue against the reasonableness of our receiv-

ing the books of the New Testament upon the testimony of the fathers, that 'we know not what they all thought; that many of them are lost, which, perhaps, contradicted the testimony of the remaining part?' Would it not be a sufficient reply to such persons, that "nothing can be more unreasonable than to reject the concurrent testimony of all, or most of the writers extant, upon so groundless a supposition as this? Nay, that it is more reasonable to think, that the writers not extant, bore witness to the same things, and that if they believe any thing upon the testimony of past writers, they ought in reason to believe this, because the same surmises lie against all historians?"[b]

I have now, I flatter myself, proved the extreme weakness of your reasoning to show the *possibility* and *probability* of a change from presbytery to episcopacy. And if the human mind cannot act without motives; if no motive can possibly be assigned consistently with the universally acknowledged principles of human actions; if a change which deprived the Presbyters of the Church of their most sacred rights, was in the highest degree calculated to produce the most violent opposition, and the most rancorous enmity—if, notwithstanding, no opposition was excited, and not a hint given by any writer of antiquity that such a revolution took place; but, on the contrary, if every author who mentions the subject, founds episcopacy upon apostolical institution; then the conclusion is irresistible, that no change took place; but that from the beginning of the Christian Church there was no such thing as *parity*, but a real distinction of office and character.

Notwithstanding the reasoning upon which I rest this conclusion is drawn from the nature of the human mind, from the well known circumstances of the Church in the second and third centuries, from the universally acknowledged virtue and piety of those who must necessarily have been concerned in this flagitious usurpation, and from the total silence of all antiquity upon the subject; yet, you venture to assert that a change was not only *practicable* and *probable*, but that it *actually took place*. Well, Sir, let us now try this point.

And here I would observe, that all you have said to prove that a change *actually took place*, is nothing more than you had said in different parts of your book; to which I have given a very particular answer. But as you have, by way of recapitulation, again brought to view the same points, it may be expedient for me to repeat, in as concise a manner as possible, my replies.

1. You urge the indiscriminate use of Scripture titles. This has been fully answered over and over again. It has been evinced, that the community of names amounts to nothing at all. There were, during the lives of the Apostles, three orders in the Church—Apostles, Bishops or Presbyters, and Deacons; and in the next age, the successors of the Apostles were styled Bishops,

[b] HOADLEY'S *Brief Defence of Episcopal Ordination*, p. 18, 19.

who had under them, Presbyters and Deacons. This is generally the language used by the writers of all ages succeeding the first; and whenever the fathers style a Bishop a Presbyter, which is very seldom, it is done with propriety, as the greater implies the less. "It is not necessary to repeat the proof of these positions. They will, therefore, be assumed as established points." But when you tell us, that, 'in the writings of the third century, we begin to perceive a style of expression indicating a commencement of a distinction between Bishops and Presbyters,' you assert what has been abundantly proved to be erroneous; for I have shown that the writers of the second century, particularly Ignatius, used the same distinctive language; and that arose not from 'a change in the *nature of the office*,' but from the fact, that the Bishops succeeded to the Apostolical pre-eminence; and that, therefore, there was no alteration in the regimen of the Church, as Presbyterian writers gratuitously assert.

2. You repeat your declaration, that Jerome, Hilary, and Chrysostom, writers of the fourth century, maintain that a change took place *after* the apostolic age; but I have shown from their express assertions, that they held episcopacy to be an apostolic institution; and their testimonies 'are so pointed and unquestionable, and so formally stated, that they must *silence* even prejudice and sophistry themselves. Were not these learned men as likely to *understand* the subject on which they wrote as any of the present day? Is it credible that they should be *totally* deceived concerning a fact, which, if it did not fall under their own observation, must have been personally witnessed by their predecessors? It is not credible. Yet unless we suppose these writers to have been either deceived or dishonest,[c] the episcopal form of Church government was of apostolic and divine institution.

3. You observe that 'Prelacy was first embraced in *populous* and wealthy cities.' This is perfectly correct. It was *first* embraced in Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, &c.; and, from these seats of primitive purity, it spread into the neighbouring countries, and became general.

You next observe, that 'Hilary and others declare that many of the African Presbyters continued to exercise the *ordaining* power until the middle of the fourth century.' I have fully proved, in my second letter, that Hilary says no such thing. The word he uses is *consignant*, not *ordinant*. *Consigno* was generally applied to baptism, sometimes to confirmation, but perhaps never to ordination. Who the others are that bear this testimony, you have not told us, and, therefore, it is needless to inquire. If *you*, Sir, have discovered any thing of this kind, it is more than any of your predecessors discovered. The secret was certainly worth disclosing.

Next, Sir, you inform us, that 'the Churches in Scotland

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remained *Presbyterian* in their government, from the introduction of Christianity into that country, in the *second* century, until the *fifth* century, when Palladius succeeded in introducing diocesan Bishops;' and you say, in a note, that 'this fact is ascertained by the writings of Major, Fordon, and Archbishop Usher.' Well, Sir, if this be true, here is something that looks like an *exception* to the general rule and practice, from whatever cause it proceeded. But if this whole story should turn out to be a mere fiction, it will certainly put you into a very unpleasant predicament. Let us give this point a fair examination, and see how the matter will terminate.

It is, I believe, universally acknowledged, that the first inhabitants of North-Britain, of whom we have any records, were the Picts, who are supposed to have been a colony from Scandinavia. According to Bede, who wrote *seven hundred years before* Fordon, the South Picts were converted to the Christian faith in the year 412, by Nennianus, a British Bishop, who had been educated at Rome, and who, of course, would plant episcopacy among them. I know it may be said, upon the authority of Prosper, a contemporary writer, that Pope Cœlestine sent, in the year 431, Palladius, whom he ordained a Bishop, to the *Scots that believed in* CHRIST. Now, the question is, who are meant by *the Scots?* According to Usher, Stillingfleet, Lloyd, and, I believe, the generality of historians, those who are now called *Scots*, are the descendants of a colony from *Ireland*, which was anciently called *Scotia*. If so, Palladius' mission was not to the people now called Scots, but to the people of Ireland. One thing is beyond dispute, because all history asserts it, that Palladius did preach the Gospel in that country before St. Patrick, and converted a few to the Christian faith. And it appears from another passage quoted by Bishop Lloyd from Prosper, that this is the true sense of the passage just produced. "'Cœlestine having ordained a Bishop for the Scots, while he endeavours to keep the *Roman island* Catholic, hath also made the *barbarous* island Christian.' Where, as by the *Roman island*, he means Britain, which other writers likewise call by that name; so, by the *barbarous island* opposed to it, he means Ireland."[d] Bishop Lloyd, to settle this point, quotes several other authorities. First, Nennius, who says, that "Bishop Palladius was sent at first (before Patrick) by Cœlestine, the Roman Bishop and Pope, to convert the Scots to CHRIST;" adding, that "Palladius went from Ireland, and came into Britain, and died there in the land of the Picts."[e] Lloyd next quotes Probus, in the life of St. Patrick. "Palladius had been sent there (before him) by Pope Cœlestine to convert this island; but God hindered him from converting that nation (of the Scots;) for these rugged and wild men would not receive his doctrine, nor would

d LLOYD's *Ancient Church Government*, &c., p. 51, 52.
e *Col.* 52, in Usher's Copy.

he stay any longer time in a land which was not his; but was disposed to return to him that sent him; and when in order to this, Palladius had passed the sea, and was come to the confines of the Picts, there he died."[f] Lloyd gives us also a similar testimony from Jocelin,[g] who says, "Because the Irish believed not his (Palladius') preaching, but most obstinately opposed him, he departed from their country; and in his way to Rome, he died in Britain, near the confines of the Picts."[h] And Lloyd further observes, that "it was above one hundred and twenty years, that the North Picts still continued in their Gentilism. And then, about the year 560, St. Columba, who was a Scot, came over out of Ireland, and having obtained the isle of Hy, where he founded a monastery, he and the monks that he brought with him, converted King Brudius and his nation to the faith of CHRIST."[i]

It appears now, Sir, from these testimonies, that the people of North Britain were not (as you say) converted to the Christian faith in the second century, but in the beginning of the fifth, by Nennianus, a British Bishop, who, of course, would put the Church under an episcopal regimen; and that Palladius was not the planter of episcopacy among them, he having been sent by Cœlestine to Ireland, where he stayed but a short time, in consequence of the little success he had in that country.

I know of nothing that can be opposed to this, but the testimony of Fordon. Let us examine what he says, and then we shall be at no loss to determine how the matter stands.

This writer was a Priest of the diocese of St. Andrews, and Chaplain of the Church of Aberdeen. He lived in the time of the kings Robert the Second and Third, and compiled *The History of the Scots* in five books, bringing it down to the death of King David the First, in 1153; which, with continuations by other hands to the death of James the First, in 1437, is commonly known by the title of *Scotichronicon*, or *the Scots Chronicle*. Now, says Skinner in his *Ecclesiastical History*,[k] "all he says on the subject is, that in the seventh year of the Emperor Severus, Victor, the first of the name, and fourteenth after St. Peter, an African, and son of one Felix, sat in the papal chair ten years, two months, and twelve days. Under him the Scots received the Christian faith in the year of our LORD 203." This, it seems is all the information that can be got from Fordon. He quotes no authorities; and as he lived one thousand one hundred years after the supposed conversion of the Scots, and contradicts authors who lived some centuries before him, his assertion, that Scotland was Christianized in the beginning of the third century, is not entitled to the least regard.

About one hundred and forty years after Fordon, came out Hector Boece's history of Scotland, in the year 1526. He repeats

f *Vita Patricii*, lib. i. col. 239.
g JOCELINI *Vita Patricii*, c. 25.
h See LLOYD'S *Ancient Church Government*, p. 57.
i Page 69.
k Vol. I. p. 27, 28.

the same story, with the embellishment of an embassy to Victor from Donald, a king of Boece's, or some other person's creating; for there is no evidence that there existed at that time any king by that name. Skinner says, "Boece was obliged to coin a king of his own: for hitherto he had met with no such name, not in any of the traditional genealogies of the old *Shannachies* (or Bards) nor in Fordon's history, which, though he had it in his possession, he never once mentions; nor in the history which he himself says Bishop Elphinstone wrote, and which he proposes to follow; nor in the *Breviary of Aberdeen*, drawn up and printed by that Bishop's order, in 1409; in none of which is a word of a King Donald, or any thing looking that way. And if so, what becomes of all the subsequent plans that we meet with of Church affairs in Boece and his followers; such as King Crathilinth's ejecting the Druids out of Man, and planting Christian clergy in their room, and the like? And what stress can be laid upon the accounts of Church government, given us in consequence of such an unsupported hypothesis, by some of our professed historians, that in these old times the Scots were instructed in the faith by Priests and Monks without Bishops?"[1]

But, Sir, were I to admit Fordon's testimony in its full force, it would be of no disservice to *us*, nor of any advantage to *you*. He says, that the Scots were converted to Christianity in the year 203, under the direction of Pope Victor. This, by the acknowledgment of your ablest writers, is fifty years after the general introduction of episcopacy; and therefore, we must of necessity conclude, that the Church of Scotland was established under that form of government.

You go on, Sir, in the same strain of misconception and misrepresentation. You say, 'It also appears, from the most authentic history, that the *country* Churches generally maintained the primitive plan of government much longer than those of the cities, and were from one to two centuries later in receiving episcopacy as a superior order. The ministers of these country congregations were called *Chorepiscopi*, or country Bishops. They continued to exercise full episcopal powers a considerable time after the Presbyters within and near the great cities had become subject to diocesans, until at length the influence of the Bishop of Rome, and of some other ambitious Prelates, procured a decree of the Council of Sardis to suppress the *Chorepiscopi* entirely.'

Here, Sir, you take for granted what you certainly ought to have fully proved, viz. That the *Chorepiscopi* were mere Presbyters. But no; you have said it, and that is proof sufficient. Had you consulted such respectable authors as Barlow, Hammond, Beveridge, and Cave, perhaps you would have received some benefit from the perusal. Had you only consulted Bingham, you would have found him asserting, that

[1] *Hist.* Vol. I. p. 37, 38.

extending the power of the Bishops; and on the other, for restraining the encroachments of those whose ambition had become inordinate and offensive.'

This account, were it even correct, is nothing to the point in debate. Restraining the encroachments of Bishops, or gradually extending their power, proves that there *were* Bishops, whose power was restrained, or extended; and as we know that there were *provincial* councils convened in the second century, then the canons of those councils relating to the Bishops of that age, prove the existence of Bishops. And, no doubt, those canons form a part of that evidence, which induced your most learned writers to concede, that episcopacy became the government of the Church in the second century. And thus, the very canons of which you speak, instead of disproving, completely prove the antiquity of episcopal regimen. What a curiosity in the region of controversy is this! All the councils, of which we have any account, were composed of Bishops. These councils sometimes found it necessary to check episcopal encroachments; at other times, to extend episcopal jurisdiction; therefore, the Bishops who were the objects of those canons, did not exist. This is strange. It appears to me that, on the contrary, most men would say, they *did* exist. Could you, Sir, produce the decree of a council of Presbyters, establishing over themselves and the people, episcopal superiors; then indeed we should have a clear account of the origin of episcopacy, posterior to the apostolic age; and this is what in reason ought to be produced by those who talk about the human invention of episcopacy. But no mortal has ever produced such a decree of the universal Church; and, therefore, if we had no other argument than *this*, for the apostolic origin of episcopacy, it seems to me that it would be quite sufficient to convince an unprejudiced mind. Every effect must have a cause; every stream must have a source. Nothing less than a decree made by the representation of the *whole* Church, could have changed an institution so highly important as that of the constitution of the Christian ministry; but as no such decree can be produced, it fairly follows, that episcopacy proceeded from apostolic authority.

You go on, Sir, under your fourth head, to repeat what you had before observed, 'that country Bishops should no longer be allowed to ordain,' to which an answer has been given; and further you say, that 'a canon was enacted that *city Presbyters* should not ordain *out of their own parishes*, without having permission of the *city Bishops*.' And your inference from these decrees is, 'that Presbyters had been before allowed to ordain; and that Bishops were gradually undergoing a change from the *parochial*, to the *diocesan* character.'

The thirteenth canon of the council of Ancyra is, no doubt, that which you had in view. But why, Sir, did you not name the *council* and the *canon*? You certainly know, that when a disputant does not refer to his authorities, he is not entitled to a

reply. But, waving this, I presume you know that this canon has occasioned a great deal of learned disquisition. Both the text and the interpretation are involved in much difficulty. Bingham observes, that "the old translators give a sense to the canon different from that of modern expositors." Their sense is, that "the city Presbyters shall do nothing without the license and authority of the Bishop in any part of the diocese belonging to his jurisdiction;"[p] that is, that they shall do nothing belonging to their office; but ordination never was a part of their office; and, therefore, the canon does not comprehend that particular. He further observes, that "some Greek copies read ἐν ἑτέρᾳ παροικίᾳ, which seems to signify that Presbyters shall not officiate in another diocese, without *letters dimissory* from their own Bishop.[q]

There is, undoubtedly, great obscurity in this canon. Dr. Hammond observes, that there is a great variety of copies, which, when he had carefully compared, he found the canon was maimed, and that two words are wanting to make it sense, and to reconcile it with the universal voice of antiquity. The words that should be supplied are πραττειν τι, *quidpiam facere* [to do any thing;] and then the canon will run thus in Latin: *Sed neque Presbyteris civitatis, sine mandato ab Episcopo per literas recepto, quidpiam facere in unaquaque paræcia;* i. e. "Neither is it allowed the *city Presbyters* to do any thing without the Bishop's license or direction in any parish (or diocese.)" This is precisely the doctrine of Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Jerome, the *Apostolical Canons*, and the tenth canon of the council of Antioch; and, therefore, it affords reasonable ground of presumption, that Dr. Hammond is right in inserting the words *quiapiam facere*, [to do any thing.] He confirms this emendation by the versions of Isidorus Mercator, Gentianus Hervetus, (deemed ancient by Blondel himself,) and by the 57th canon of the council of Laodicea, which runs in almost the same words—*Similiter et Presbyteri præter consilium Episcopi nihil agant;* i. e. "Likewise, let the Presbyters do nothing contrary to the will or counsel of the Bishop."[r]

Du Pin also observes, that "this canon is imperfect, and that something must be supplied to make it sense; for what (says he) mean these words, *Nor to the city Presbyters in another parish without the permission of their Bishops?* Had Priests ever power to ordain other Priests in their own churches? Had they ever permission to do it out of their own churches by the Bishop's letters? Why should not the *Suffragans*, (*Chorepiscopi*) who were above the priests, have the same power? There must be something added. See what Dionysius Exiguus added,

p Ex versione DIONYSII EXIGUI: Sed nec Presbyteris civitatis, sine præcepto Episcopi, amplius aliquid imperare, nec sine auctoritate literarum ejus in unaquaque parochia aliquid agere.

q *Antiquities*, Vol. I. p. 84, 85.

r *Dissert. tertia de omnibus Evangeliorum Periochis, &c.* c. 9.

in his version: 'No more is it lawful for Priests *to do any thing* in the diocese, without the permission of the Bishop in writing.' This addition is found in the ancient code of the Romish church, published by Quesnellus, and in the version of Isidore; and Justellus has restored it in the Greek text of the code of the universal Church."[s]

The observation of Du Pin, that the text of the canon is in a very corrupt state, from the circumstance of its making the city Presbyters to have been allowed to ordain without the Bishop's license, previously to the passing of the canon, while the Chorepiscopi, who were true and proper Bishops, were restricted from the exercise of that part of their office, carries with it great force. There is no way of removing from the canon, the charge of inconsistency with the principles and practice of the Church at the time when it was formed, but by adding the words, *to do any thing*, as has been done by the ablest and best writers, both ancient and modern.

I have dwelt the longer upon this point, to show the very singular way you have of settling every thing, however obscure and difficult. You *assert roundly*, and there is an end of the matter. But surely, Sir, there must be *some* among your readers, who will not be put off in this way. There must be *some*, however predisposed to receive your assertions, that will be staggered when they find adduced so many instances in your work of unfair management, and so many proofs given of your contradicting well-authenticated facts. This last instance of *arbitrary* decision is not the *least*, and I believe it will not be the *last*, of this very censurable catalogue.

Before I go on to your fifth head of observations, I would just observe, that it is an argument against episcopacy which one would not have expected from a man of sense and a scholar, that there have been Bishops who attempted to extend their authority beyond its due limits. Yes, Sir, this is undoubtedly true: but is it not equally true, that Presbyters and Deacons have done the same? With respect to the latter, does not Jerome tell you so? And with respect to the former, is not history full of it? I name but one of these Presbyters—Calvin, (supposing him to be such) the Apostle of Geneva. Consider his conduct, and be silent forever.

Under your fifth head you say,—'The gradual diminution of the number of Bishops, after the first three centuries, serves to confirm the fact for which I am contending. The great number of Bishops found in the early ages of the Church, was remarked in a former letter. They appear to have been as numerous within two or three centuries of the apostolic age, as modern *parish ministers*. But as we recede from that period, we find their number gradually diminishing, in exact proportion as their claims and honours became extended. In the island of Crete,

s *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 249.

where we are informed that in early times there were *one hundred* Bishops, in a few centuries afterwards we find but *twelve*. In a small district in Asia, where, in the third century, there were settled *one hundred and five Bishops*, in two or three centuries their number was reduced to *nine*.—What is the obvious inference from these facts? That primitive Bishops were a very different class of officers from those which bore that name three or four centuries afterwards; and consequently, that during this period an important change had taken place in the character and powers of Bishops.'

Here, Sir, you give us a story very different from that you told us in your fifth letter.[t] *Now*, you say, after the third century the number of Bishops decreased; *then*, you represented their numbers in the fourth and fifth centuries as enormously great—

> Thick as in spring the flowers adorn the land
> Or leaves the trees———

One of the councils in the fifth century, you say, was composed of *six thousand* Bishops. Here then must have been a prodigious *increase* of Bishops, after the period you have assigned for their *diminution*. And in the same century, you assert, that the council of *a single province* in Africa, was composed of between *five* and *six hundred* Bishops. Where now is the *diminution* of Bishops after the third century? The fact is, that Bishops in the apostolic age were but few, while Presbyters were very numerous. There were several Elders at Jerusalem, and but one Bishop, St. James. That was also the case at Ephesus, and Crete, and Philippi, and Alexandria, and Rome, and other places. In the second century, we find the Bishops much increased, in consequence of the diffusion of Christianity; but the Presbyters, from the same cause, increased proportionably. This continued to be the case during the subsequent ages. The increase of Bishops in Africa in particular, after the schism of the Donatists, was enormously great; those schismatics placing a Bishop of their own, wherever the Catholics had one.[u] But after the Roman Empire was torn to pieces by the northern barbarians, a considerable change took place. The number of Bishops was in some places lessened; and after the conquest of the Saracens in the East, many flourishing Churches were entirely extinguished, and most of them greatly diminished both as to clergy and people. The frequent revolutions which took place in the eastern and western empires, produced a constant change in the number of Bishops; generally on grounds of a political nature, in no way connected with the spiritual nature of the office. But what argument can be drawn from all this against the apostolic

t Page 198, 199.

u How strangely is the world altered in this respect! The very heretics and schismatics took care always to have Bishops; for they knew that otherwise it would be an unanswerable argument against them in the mouths of the Catholics. Just the reverse is the case at present.

origin of episcopacy, is beyond my comprehension. Whether Bishops have been more or less numerous at different periods, has no more to do with the origin of their office, than with the origin of Presbytery, or of Independency.

What you say, Sir, with respect to the island of Crete, and a small district in Asia, wants to be supported by competent authority. What author says that there were a hundred Bishops in that island in early times? Till I saw your book I had never heard of it. I have consulted Eusebius in those parts of his history in which one would naturally look for such an account. But I can find nothing like it. Bingham, who has given the most correct view of the primitive dioceses, speaks a language very different from yours. His words are, "In the isle of Crete, Carolus a Sancto Paulo names eleven dioceses. The *Notitia* of Leo Sapiens, in Leunclavius, makes them twelve; but Hierapetra is there, by mistake of some transcriber, divided into two, which being corrected, reduces them to the same number. Whence I conclude, this was pretty near the standing number for several ages."[r]

It now appears, I think, very evident, that you are at variance with yourself upon this point; but putting that out of the question, you are at variance with the best authorities we have upon the extent of dioceses, and the number of Bishops in the primitive ages. But if you were even correct, still your inference with respect to the origin of episcopacy has nothing to do with the position, that the number of Bishops decreased after the third century. That is easily accounted for, from the well known events which took place in the Eastern and Western Empires, and from that constant mutability which attends all human affairs.

The last circumstance which you advance in favour of your hypothesis is, 'that it is confirmed by the most learned and impartial historians;' and of these you mention three—Mosheim, Gibbon, and Haweis.

These three writers give us nothing more than their opinion; and I have already observed, that the value of an opinion depends upon the strength of the evidence by which it is supported. Mosheim gives no *proofs;* he merely *asserts.* Assertions are easily made; but proofs are not so easily given. Mosheim too had the system of his own Church to maintain. The prejudice and errors arising from this source, every thinking mind must be aware of. Many great men have adopted opinions utterly inconsistent with facts, and have maintained principles from which common sense revolts.

Gibbon is another of your authorities, if the *opinion* of a man can be called *authority.* I wonder, Sir, that it did not strike you, that a man who denied the divine origin of the Scriptures, could not, with the least consistency, allow the divine origin of

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r *Antiquities,* Vol. I. p. 426.

episcopacy. To have done this, would have been to renounce infidelity. If the Scriptures have not the stamp of divinity, certainly the ministry, which was instituted to preserve and expound them, cannot claim any character of that sort.

Your next historian is Dr. Haweis. Did you quote him, Sir, on account of the weight he derives from his learning, or profound knowledge of antiquity, or consistency of character? Do you think that a man who despises learning, can be very learned himself, and who abuses all the fathers of the Church, can know much about them? Do you think that man's testimony is of much weight, who always takes part with heretics and schismatics, and commends Novatians, Donatists, Meletians, and Luciferians, while Catholic confessors and martyrs are treated with contempt, because they did not think as he does upon the subjects of *predestination* and *grace?* Can you think that man's opinion of any consequence, who says, that he "thinks episcopacy most correspondent to the *apostolic practice*, and the *general usage* of the Church in the *first* and *generally esteemed purer ages*," and yet can unite with those who have departed from *apostolical practice*, and are the avowed enemies of *primitive usage?* Can he be a proper guide to those who wish to be acquainted with the constitution of CHRIST's Church, who says, that "most of the Apostles *lived* and *died* among their brethren in *Palestine*;" that "all ecclesiastical officers for the first three hundred years were elected by the people;" and that "Matthias was *thus* chosen to fill up the *tribular* number of the Apostles," as he expresses himself? Is that man a diligent and accurate historian, who talks of the "*constitutions* of Ignatius," meaning, no doubt, the *Apostolical Constitutions*, which were pretended to have been written by Clement; who calls Polycarp the disciple of Ignatius, when all the primitive writers assert that he was the disciple of St. John; who mistakes the name of an office for the name of a man, calling Pontius, the Deacon of St. Cyprian, Pontius Diaconus? Can, in short, that man, who is so *spiritually minded*, because he believes the doctrine of *election* and *reprobation*, be a sure guide to *primitive truth and order*, when he speaks contemptuously of the great lights of antiquity, the martyrs and confessors of the faith of JESUS; and when he rejects in a lump the testimony of the early writers of the Catholic Church? If such a man's opinion can be of any service to you, avail yourself of it, Sir; but we will be contented with the *ancient fathers, as historians of the facts which were accessible to their inquiries.*[w]

I will close this letter with recommending as a counterpoise to your three historians, the Ecclesiastical Histories of Eusebius, Sozomen, and Theodoret among the ancients; Echard's and Du Pin's among the moderns; and, with them, Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church.*

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w See a *Review of* HAWEIS' *Church History*, annexed to SKINNER'S *Answer to Campbell's Lectures*, lately published by T. & J. Swords.

LETTER XX.

REV. SIR:

I HAVE now considered, as briefly as I well could, your manner of obviating the difficulties attending the supposition of a change of government in the purest ages of the Christian Church; and if I do not deceive myself, it has been demonstrated, that it was morally impossible, that such a change should have taken place before the Roman empire became Christian. The profound silence of all antiquity upon the subject; the impracticability of a change, considering the circumstances of the Church in the first three ages; the absurdity of the supposition, considering the nature of the human mind, which cannot act without motives; the extreme difficulty of perceiving any motive that could have actuated the breasts of the usurpers; the inconsistency of such a supposition, with the positive testimony of the fathers to the apostolic origin of episcopacy; the well known purity of the Church in the second century, when this change is supposed to have taken place; all these accumulated considerations place episcopacy upon high and impregnable ground. They afford what the great Chillingworth does not scruple to call *a demonstration* of the apostolic origin of episcopacy. The demonstration stands thus—"Episcopal government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the Church presently after the Apostles' times. Between the Apostles' times and that *presently after*, there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration. And, therefore, there was no such alteration as is pretended. And, therefore, episcopacy being confessed to be so *ancient* and *catholic*, must be granted to be also *apostolic*."

In the preceding letter, I showed that Presbyterian writers are at variance, when they attempt to assign the century when episcopacy first appeared in the Church; and also observed, that this difference among themselves affords a strong presumption that they are all wrong. I would now observe, that as they cannot agree with respect to the *time*, so neither can they with respect to the *source* of this usurpation. The generality ascribe it to wicked ambition, rendered successful by general corruption. But the celebrated Dr. Campbell takes very different ground. He condemns those who ascribe the change to *corruption*; for that, he says, is ascribing it to what did not exist. The Church, he assures us, was in great purity, and the clergy were distinguished for their virtue and piety in the second century; and you make the same acknowledgment. He ascribes the change not to *vice*, but to *virtue*; not to *corruption*, but to *piety*. Well, Sir, where are we now? According to the learned Principal, virtue and piety changed presbyterian into episcopal govern-

ment. Who then would not wish, that the offspring of so venerable a parent were suffered to exist in peace? And what an implied reflection upon presbyterian parity, that the interests of religion required its abolition! But what sort of virtue and piety could that be, which led the Presbyters to offer to a few of their own order, episcopal pre-eminence, and those to whom it was offered, to receive it; both parties well knowing that it was contrary to the will of CHRIST? And what were both parties to get by thus depraving the government of the Church, and violating a sacred institution? They certainly could expect no reward in the *next* life for their transgression. And what did *this* life offer to the *Presbyters* for degrading themselves, and to the *Bishops* for receiving this unchristian boon? To the *former*, imagination can give no equivalent; as to the *latter*, did they derive from it wealth and secular advantage? No; poverty and contempt were their certain portion. Had they less suffering and greater security? No; but almost inevitable death, and every species of torture. It seems, then, that no motive can possibly be assigned, either on the ground of *virtue*, or of *corruption*, for this wonderful change.

The mode which the learned Principal adopted to account for this extraordinary revolution is, if possible, worse than yours. It is ascribing to *piety*, what nothing but *monstrous depravity* could have suggested; it is ascribing to the human mind (as your hypothesis also does) *action* without *motive*, which is palpable nonsense; it is supposing the Bishops to be idiots, in accepting a superiority, from which no advantage could result, either in this world or in the next; and, lastly, it supposes (as the ground usually taken does) that all the subsequent writers and councils were grossly ignorant, or stupidly credulous, in regard to the apostolic origin of episcopacy.—Thus much for Dr. Campbell's speculation.

The *fact* being thus, I think, established, that *diocesan* episcopacy was sanctioned by the Apostles, and that it was not the offspring of human ambition, as you unjustifiably assert, I have no need of taking notice of what you call 'a sketch of the rise and progress of this remarkable usurpation.'[a] For all you have said from page 321 to page 329 is nothing more than what you had said in a more diffused manner throughout your book; to every article of which, a sufficient answer, (I flatter myself) has been given.

Before I pass on to your concluding letter, I shall make a few observations on the testimonies you adduce from Gregory Nazianzen. You say, 'That the synods and councils which early began to be convened, were, *in fact*, thus employed by the ambitious clergy, to extend and confirm their power, might be proved by witnesses almost numberless. The testimony of one shall suffice.' You then quote Gregory as saying, 'that he was

a Page 321 et sequent.

desirous of avoiding all synods, because he had never seen a good effect, or happy conclusion of any one of them; that they rather increased than lessened the evils they were designed to prevent; and that the love of contention, and the *lust of power*, were there manifest in instances innumerable.' And afterwards speaking of the council of Constantinople, which met in 381, he remarks—'These conveyers of the HOLY GHOST, these preachers of peace to all men, grew bitterly outrageous and clamorous against one another, in the midst of the Church, mutually accusing each other, leaping about as if they had been mad, under the furious impulse of a lust of power and dominion, as if they would have rent the whole world in pieces. This was not the effect of piety, but of *a contention for thrones*.' Again: 'Would to GOD there were *no prelacy*, no pre-eminence of place, no tyrannical privileges; and that we might be distinguished by virtue alone. This right and left hand, and this middle place, these higher and lower dignities, and this state-like precedency, have caused many fruitless contests and bruises, have cast many into the pit, and carried away multitudes to the place of goats.' Upon these quotations, you ask, 'Would an eminently learned and pious Bishop have spoken thus, if he had considered prelacy as of divine appointment?'

To this question I answer without hesitation—Yes, he might have thus spoken in perfect consistency with the belief that episcopacy was of divine origin. Was there ever a more fallacious mode of reasoning than this? Bishops have abused their authority, therefore the office is not of divine appointment. Some councils have done more harm than good; therefore councils are pernicious. Whither will not this sophistry lead us? Certainly, Sir, farther than you desire. Many of your readers, no doubt, will stop precisely at the point at which you would wish them to stop; but others will "push you over the precipice," with the consequences of this fallacy. The Papists will tell you, that reading the Bible has produced heresies and schisms; therefore it cannot be the duty of the laity to read it. The Quaker will tell you, and with truth, that Presbyters, as well as Bishops, have been proud, and contentious, and ambitious; and, therefore, we are better without them. The Deist will tell you, that Christianity has occasioned seditions, rebellions, wars, massacres, and innumerable other mischiefs; and, therefore, it cannot be of divine institution. Whither will not this sophism lead us? It has deprived us of a Bible, of a ministry, and of religion altogether. It will also deprive us of civil government. Under every form much mischief has been done. Great injustice, cruelty, and oppression of every kind, have been committed by rulers in all ages, and all nations; therefore, we are better without government. Language, says the misanthrope, is a great evil. It enables men to curse, and swear, and lie, and backbite; therefore they would do better without it. Food and drink are pernicious things, for thousands make beasts

of themselves, and sink both body and soul into perdition. Whither will not this sophistry lead us?—But I am done; it is too apparent not be perceived, too pernicious not to be rejected.

Permit me, Sir, seriously to ask you, what was your object in presenting to your readers these quotations from Gregory? Was it to disprove the divine origin of episcopacy? That would be too absurd. Was it to show that he did not consider it as proceeding from that source? But what if he did not; it would not affect the evidence for it. It would amount to no more than *opinion*. I presume the object was, to prejudice your readers against episcopacy. If you could make a Presbyterian of Gregory, as he lived near the close of the fourth century, it would be a shadow in your favour. So valuable are the *ancient fathers*, if they can, by any means, be got to cast a favourable look upon ministerial parity! But how, Sir, have you discovered that Gregory did not believe episcopacy to be of divine origin? Is it from his condemnation of the *abuse* of the office? You will hardly answer this question in the affirmative. That would lead you into all the consequences of this species of sophism. Is it from the quotations you have given us? There is no assertion of that sort in them. Is it from his wishing that there were no dignities in the Church—no higher places to contend about? That wish, when properly understood, is perfectly consistent with a belief of the divine origin of episcopacy. The temporal prerogatives, great wealth, and high honours that were attached to the episcopal office, were merely accidental circumstances, and in no respect whatever necessarily connected with the office. The powers of a Bishop, like those of a Presbyter, are altogether spiritual, and, therefore, presenting nothing to gratify ambition, or to foster pride. It is, when faithfully discharged, a laborious, painful, and highly responsible office. I cannot conceive what there is in such an office, to induce any man to aspire after it, when neither wealth, nor temporal honours are annexed to it. But it has been too much the misfortune of the Church, to have her dignitaries overloaded with the distinctions of the world, which have a natural tendency to wean the mind from spiritual things.

In reading over that abstract of the works of Gregory, which Du Pin has given us, I cannot find a single expression that would induce one to think, that he did not believe the divine institution of episcopacy. It rather affords a presumption that he did believe it, that he himself was a Bishop. And in his seventeenth discourse about some difference that happened at Nazianzum, between the people and the governor, he tells him "that he should not take it ill, that he spoke to him with freedom; that *the law of* GOD *subjects him to the commandment of his Bishop*."[b] Now, with what truth could Gregory say so, if he did not believe that the episcopal office was of divine appointment? It is a necessary consequence of such a declaration.

b DU PIN'S *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 166.

But does not Gregory wish, that there were 'no *prelacy*, no *pre-eminence* of place, no tyrannical privileges?' He does not wish that there were no Bishops, but no *pre-eminence* among Bishops—no *tyrannical* privileges among that *order* of the ministry; but that they were all as CHRIST left them, perfectly equal. This, Sir, is very sound doctrine, and perfectly consistent with high church principles. Even the *Metropolitical* presidency, as it stood before the empire became Christian, is not at all inconsistent with this wish of Gregory's. A well regulated presidency, not confined to the Bishops of the *Metropoles*, but falling where it ought, upon men of the greatest virtue and talents, is liable to no reasonable objection. Unfortunately, this moderation was not observed after the empire became Christian, but some undue privileges were conferred by the civil power upon the Bishops of the great cities. It is against this *pre-eminence of place*, against these *tyrannical privileges*, that Gregory exclaims. But you, very unwarrantably, endeavour to make your readers believe, that he wished there was no episcopal superiority in the Church; and, to give it that air, you translate the Greek word προεδρία,[c] *prelacy*, when it would be more correct to translate it *chief seat*, or *prerogative* of place—that is, *chief seat* among Bishops, whom he wished to see in a state of equality; since pre-eminence of place had been attended with so much contention. This is the true sense of the quotations you have given us from Gregory.

In order to determine, how far the censures passed by Gregory upon some of the Bishops of his age, are well founded, it is necessary to know the state of the Church when he wrote—what were the particular provocations he received, and what were his temper and disposition. Without the knowledge of these circumstances, it is impossible to form a correct judgment upon this point.

With respect to the state of the Church, it is certain that she had declined considerably from her primitive purity and simplicity. This declension was not confined to a particular order. Gregory pours forth his censures upon the Presbyters and people also. Here your question may be retorted. 'Would an eminently learned and pious Bishop have spoken thus [of Presbyters] if he had considered their office as of divine appointment?' But notwithstanding this much to be lamented decay of piety, there were many excellent Bishops and Priests, and a great number of virtuous and religious people. But while there were *any* of a contrary character, Gregory's virtuous mind would be sensibly wounded; and, in consequence, be powerfully impelled to make the thunder of his eloquence heard far and wide. A man of his rigid and austere disposition, and lively, ungovernable fancy, would naturally be led into unqualified and excessive strains of lamentation and censure. We ought, there-

c See BILSON. *Perpetual Government*, &c. p. 399.

fore, to make great abatements from his high strain of invective, and set down a good deal to the severity of the man. One who could so highly panegyrize monkery, does not appear to me to be very well qualified to make a cool and dispassionate estimate of the manners of the age. Add to all this, the particular provocations which he had received, and then we shall be able to determine pretty accurately, how far we may safely admit his censures.

Gregory was ordained Priest by his father, and Bishop of Sasima by Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea. He was afterwards Bishop of Constantinople. In that see, he met with much opposition from the Arians, who were so numerous and influential as to excite an uproar against him. The Arian Bishops and clergy were at the bottom of this outcry. "Being very eloquent (says Du Pin) he converted, in a little time, a great number of Arians, and increased the Catholics. He continued in the government of that Church for some time; till an unhappy difference arose between him and the eastern Bishops about the ordination of Flavianus, in the room of Meletius, Bishop of Antioch. The opposition he met with in that affair, induced him to resign his bishopric. He left Constantinople with great regret, and ever afterwards spoke with indignation of those Bishops, who had forced him away from his see."

To these considerations add the temper of the man. According to Du Pin, he was of a severe and morose disposition. Fond of retirement, and the tranquility of the ascetic life, he viewed all the affairs of this world with too much of the temper of the misanthrope. Soured by disappointments, and provoked by what he deemed injuries, he gave way too much to lacerated feelings, and, in consequence, poured forth all the bitterness of invective. The eastern Bishops, in particular, he considered as his enemies; and from a want of cool and dispassionate discrimination, he confounded the innocent with the guilty. All this, considering the weakness of human nature, is not much to be wondered at. Man ever has been, and ever will be, governed more by feeling than by reason; and perhaps history cannot furnish an instance better calculated to prove the correctness of this assertion, than that which the life and character of Gregory afford.

It does not require any great knowledge of the philosophy of the human mind, to determine in what light this celebrated Bishop's censures are to be viewed. The general decline of primitive piety afforded him some ground for dissatisfaction, and the injuries which he had received greatly increased his discontent. But still, truth and justice required that he should have charged the injuries (if they really were such) to those who were guilty of them, and not have involved all the Bishops of his time in one indiscriminate censure. Notwithstanding, however, this comprehensive and undistinguishing strain of invective, Gregory takes care not to condemn the *order* itself.

That, beyond all doubt, he believed to be of divine appointment.

I should not have dwelt so long upon this point, could I have supposed that all who read your letters are *reasoners*. When the mind is prejudiced against any particular profession or order of men, the faults of that profession or order are laid hold of with avidity. The nature and utility of the order are never viewed with a philosophic eye; never placed in the scale of fair estimation. Some of that order have been degenerate; therefore, the order itself is useless. This, with prejudiced and superficial reasoners, is generally the conclusion.

It does not a little astonish me, that a man of your good sense, of your amiable disposition, and of your universally acknowledged discretion, should have gone into a mode of discussion, so repugnant to every rule of right reasoning, and to every dictate of sound prudence. That you should not see the fallacy of arguing against the *use* of a thing, from the *abuse* of it, is not to be supposed; and that you should not perceive, that this mode of reasoning would, if admitted, totally destroy the ministry of the Church, is scarcely possible to be conceived. This presents to my mind a difficulty of no easy solution. I have no other way of freeing myself from this embarrassment, but by supposing that your strong prejudice got the better of your good sense.

A few more remarks upon three or four passages in your eighth letter will be sufficient. At p. 333, you say, 'In this *gradual* change, which was more than *three centuries* in accomplishing, no reasonable man could expect to find the limits of the several steps precisely defined; because each step was slowly, and almost insensibly taken; and more especially, because the practice of all the Churches was not *uniform*. There was no *particular time* when the transition from a state of *perfect parity*, to a fixed and acknowledged *superiority of order*, took place *at once*, and, therefore, no such time can be assigned.'

In these assertions you flatly contradict St. Jerome, who says, *that the change took place in consequence of a decree throughout the world, for the purpose of checking schism.* Will you adhere to him only when he is obscure, and abandon him when he is clear and intelligible? He lived but two centuries after the supposed change, and must, therefore, in reason be supposed to have known more about the matter than you can possibly know. Yet he does not say a syllable about a change *after* the death of the Apostles. If you have given us a true account of the 'rise and progress of episcopacy,' you must have derived it from the writings of the *ancients;* but he had all those writings which you have, and many more; and yet he has given us an account of the matter very different from your's. What now shall we say? Which is right, you, or this man of 'great research?'

2. You not only contradict Jerome, but the ablest Presbyterians that have ever written upon the subject—Blondel, Salmasius, Chamier, and a number of others. They place the change in the second century, and some of them acknowledge, that there was a moderate prelacy established by the Apostles themselves. But it seems all their diligence, learning, and knowledge of antiquity, only led them astray. But you have been able, by the help of Boyse, Campbell, Clarkson, and a few others, to give us a better account of the matter. It is, to be sure, possible, that you have turned over more pages of the fathers than Blondel and Salmasius; but if I may judge from your seldom giving us any references, I should not be very positive that you have.

3. You directly contradict all antiquity. I have, in the course of this discussion, produced so many direct, positive, decisive assertions of the ancients, in favour of the apostolical institution of episcopacy, that it seems to me impossible, by any means whatever, to evade their force. Notwithstanding this accumulated evidence, which you must have seen in episcopal writers, you give your readers a fanciful 'sketch of the rise and progress of episcopacy;' and assert every thing with as much positiveness, as if you had produced authorities in abundance. Really, Sir, at this rate, facts have changed their nature, and are altogether the creations of fancy.

Another particular which I shall notice, is your assertion that, 'in some Churches there were *several* Bishops at the same time; in others, but *one*.' I have already shown that it was a Catholic maxim, "One Bishop in a city," let the Presbyters be ever so numerous. Indeed, when a Bishop was aged, a coadjutor was appointed; or when there was a powerful schism, as in the case of the Donatists, in order to effect a reconciliation, the Bishops of the schismatics were allowed to act in conjunction with the Catholic Bishops; and this was the circumstance that multiplied Bishops so much in Africa; but never were there any Churches that had *several* Bishops at the same time, as you assert, not only *without* authority, but in *opposition* to all the authorities of antiquity.

You repeat, at the close of this letter, the idle tale of St. Patrick's establishing presbyterianism in Ireland. This fiction, I flatter myself, has been sufficiently exposed. That the Pope of Rome should direct his missionary to plant presbytery among the converts to Christianity in that island, is so monstrously absurd, that I wonder a man of sense can utter any thing of the kind. But the mind of man is a strange thing. It can see clearly enough when the object corresponds with its inclination; but when otherwise, a distinct perception, and a rational decision are not to be expected.

I have now, Sir, answered every thing of consequence, not only in this, but in every preceding letter; and that the precise point of dispute may be left clearly and strongly on the minds

of our readers, I will, in a few words, again present it to their view.

The question between us is, what is the constitution of the Christian Church? To prove it episcopal, I have quoted several passages from the New Testament; and, to show that our interpretation of these passages is correct, I have produced numerous testimonies from the primitive writers. This is the only possible way of deciding a question of fact. There has not been a single testimony produced by you that says, episcopacy was *not* the government of the Church in the apostolic age; but I have produced a number of testimonies which directly say, that episcopacy is a divine institution, and a still greater number which necessarily imply it. The comparatively few passages which you have produced from the fathers, are expressed in such vague and indefinite language, that unless we interpret them by what is clear and decisive, (as common sense says we ought,) we must remain in the dark as to the meaning. By having recourse to this rule, we make St. Jerome consistent with himself; and what is of infinitely more consequence, we make the testimony of the Scriptures and of the fathers perfectly consistent. If we abandon this rule, and adopt your hypothesis, we immediately set them at variance, and present a difficulty to the mind incapable of rational solution.

I have also shown, from the nature of the human mind, which cannot act without a motive, and from the universally acknowledged circumstances of the Church in the second century, that a change which deprived the Presbyters of their rights, could not have taken place. And, antecedently to this supposed change, I have shown that the venerable Ignatius, whose writings have been completely proved to be genuine and authentic by Pearson and Hammond, and allowed to be so by the great body of the learned, declares over and over again, that episcopacy is of divine institution. This testimony is of immense weight, and can never be diminished by any efforts of genius, by any subtleties of sophistry, or by any plausibility of theory.

It has also been shown, that no Church, after the most severe investigation, can be produced, in which episcopal government did not prevail, till the sixteenth century. The Armenian and Persian Churches in the East, those of Spain in the West, of Africa in the South, and of Great Britain in the North, submitted to episcopal regimen, without a single exception. And the proof we have for all this, is the universal testimony of those writers, upon whose authority we admit the canon of Scripture.

Here then I would ask a conscientious Presbyterian, whether he can in his heart believe, that the primitive saints and martyrs would be so profligate as to usurp the episcopal pre-eminence in defiance of the institution of the Apostles? Whether they would attempt this, not only without any worldly motive, but with a certainty of greater loads of care and affliction, and with the strongest probability of a terrible death? I would ask him,

whether men would attempt to usurp a little spiritual authority with such expectations, and upon such principles? And if it were possible to conceive it, whether they *could* prevail in so short a time over the widely diffused Church of CHRIST; and that too without opposition, or one word of complaint from the degraded Presbyters? But admitting these unreasonable suppositions, I would ask a conscientious Presbyterian, whether he ought to consider the *supposition* of a fact, as equivalent to the *proof* of it? The fact still remains to be *proved*, although we admit the *possibility* of it.

I conclude, therefore, in the words of Mr. Reeves, that "Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon, were the three orders of the Church from the beginning to the days of John Calvin, who, though a wise and learned man, showed his frailty first, by thrusting himself into the sacred function without being lawfully called; and, secondly, by drawing up, out of his own head, a new scheme of ecclesiastical polity, wherein he excludes the episcopal order, and lodges the whole power of the Church in a minister with lay-elders; and taking advantage of the fondness and necessity of the people, and the absence of the Bishop, made them swear as absolutely to his new scheme, as if every tittle of it had been dictated from Mount Sinai; although, by his own confession, but *intimated* in Scripture, and this *intimation* never thought of by any of the ancients, nor any strictures of such a form entertained in any Church upon earth before his own time. This novel regimen found its way into the French and Dutch reformed Churches, and after some time into the Church of Scotland; but the Church of England kept close to the *primitive* government, concluding that we might as well reform ourselves out of the inferior orders of Presbyter and Deacon, as that of Bishop. And that if any one of these apostolic institutions may be nulled by human authority, so might the rest, and so we might come to have a new form of Church government every moon, or, if that seem best, none at all. And, therefore, (says he,) though I have all imaginable good will and charity for the *foreign* Churches, who, under their hands, have testified their readiness to conform with us, were they in our place, and plead *necessity* for their difference, yet being no judge, I shall not take upon me to determine how far this plea now will justify or excuse them. But this plea of theirs can never reach our *home dissenters*, who have nothing to object against the moderation of our present Bishops (as Calvin had against those of Rome) but only that they are Bishops. And, therefore, I cannot think it is either reasonable or lawful, to write ourselves out of an apostolical institution, confirmed by the concurring sense and practice of all the fathers, by a prescription of fifteen hundred years standing, and by the judgment of our own reformers and martyrs. I can never think ourselves, I say, obliged in charity to write ourselves out of this complicated authority, into a compliance with such consciences as make

such Bishops one article for schism, which their pretended patron St. Jerome makes decreed by the Apostles, for the extirpation of the seeds of schism all the world over."[d]

The way is now open for me to make a few remarks upon your concluding letter.

Your first observation is, that 'the *practical influence* of any doctrine, has been generally considered as a good test of its *truth. By their fruits ye shall know them*, is a rule which applies to principles, as well as to men. Let us apply this rule to the case before us. If Prelacy be of exclusive and unalterable divine right; if it be so essential, that there is no true Church, no authorized ministry, no valid ordinances without it; if episcopal Churches *alone* are in covenant with CHRIST, in the appointed road to heaven, and warranted to hope in the promises of GOD; then we may reasonably expect and demand that all Churches of this denomination should display more of the spirit of CHRIST than any other classes of professing Christians. But is this in fact the case? Will the friends of Prelacy undertake to show, that they *alone* give this evidence that they belong to CHRIST? Will they even undertake to show, that Episcopalians exhibit in a *pre-eminent degree*, this practical testimony, that they are the *chosen generation*, the *peculiar people*, who are purified by the blood, and quickened by the SPIRIT of the REDEEMER?'

To this I answer, first; That the highest Episcopalians can claim no more than a divine right for episcopacy. Precisely the same right do Presbyterians claim for presbytery. 'No ministry, no Church,' is a maxim with the Westminster divines. Now, the people called Quakers have no ministry. They may then ask you in nearly your own words; If Presbytery be of divine right; if it be so essential, that there is no true Church without it; if those Churches only are in covenant with CHRIST which have a ministry; then Presbyterians should display more of the spirit of CHRIST, than we do. But is this in fact the case? Are they more pious, more peaceable, more humble, and less conformed to the world than we are?' What, Sir, will you say to this? Will you say, Yes?—I doubt it.

I am entirely at a loss to conjecture how you will solve this difficulty. If you say, we do not pretend to have more piety and virtue than the people called Quakers; then the question will be, What is the advantage of your having a ministry of divine institution? 'The blessing of GOD is, beyond all question, most likely to attend those institutions which are most agreeable to his will;' and yet there is a body of Christians, who want an essential part of a Christian Church, who are as pious and virtuous as those who have it. How, Sir, do you solve the difficulty? Will you boldly cut the knot, and say, the Quakers are hypocrites; their virtue and piety are but in

d *Preface concerning the right Use of the Fathers.*

appearance? You will not venture to talk in this manner; for, to say nothing of the uncharitableness of it, you will be asked, How do you know that they are hypocrites? We can only judge from the life and conversation; and they appear in these respects full as correct as Presbyterians. How then do you obviate the difficulty?—Oh! I perceive your manner of extricating yourself.

You say (page 344) 'It does not affect the solidity of this argument, that some Churches which Presbyterians consider as not *regularly* organized, upon *scriptural* principles, nevertheless embrace in their bosom a large portion of unaffected piety. If we undertook to maintain that the Presbyterian Church is the only real Church on earth, and alone in covenant with CHRIST the head, such a fact would, indeed, present a difficulty of no easy solution.'

And do you really think, that this solves the difficulty? Either you admit that the Quakers belong to the visible Church, or you do not. If the former, then there may be a Church without sacraments and a ministry; and if so, you contradict the Westminster divines, your ablest and best writers, and what is worse, the holy Scriptures. In the latter, none are considered as members of CHRIST's mystical *body* who are not baptized into the visible Church. If you do not consider the Quakers as belonging to the visible Church, then the difficulty remains in full force against you. You are precisely in the same situation with respect to that people, that we are with respect to you; even upon the supposition that we do not allow Presbyterians to be members of the *visible* Church. What right, then, have you to find fault with Episcopalians, when you set up a claim, which excludes the Quakers from being members of CHRIST's visible Church? Do to them as you would have us do to you, and then all will be fair and equal.

This is reasoning the matter with you, even upon the highest claims of episcopacy. If you can solve the difficulty which you propose, as it respects the Quakers, we can adopt your mode, to solve the difficulty as it respects *you*. Make the experiment, Sir, and I will engage to follow your track; provided you do not give up the principle, that a ministry is essential to a Christian Church.

I think I might safely let the matter rest upon this ground. But as I wish to have this point clearly and fully understood, I will give the real state of the case in a few words. There are two principal divisions of Episcopalians. One division believe that episcopacy is of divine right, in that strict sense, that there can be no *valid* administrations without it. At the same time, they do not entertain the most distant thought, that the want of it will preclude men from salvation, when it proceeds from necessity, or from honest error. They believe that such error will be forgiven, and sincere piety accepted in all who profess the faith of CHRIST. No charity can be more extensive than this; and whatever may be thought of the correctness of the principle, no

fault can be found with the temper of the mind. They think, that if episcopacy be a divine institution, and there can be no Church without a ministry, the inevitable consequence is, that episcopacy is essential to the visible Church. And as to the difficulty which you propose, they do not view it as any difficulty at all; for they say, when the heart is right, that grace which is not promised to unauthorized administrations, is granted by special favour; so that none will fail of salvation when the error is not wilful, or when necessity excludes men from episcopal administrations. Now, whatever may be thought of this reasoning, it appears to me to be the only way in which you can reconcile your own principle, 'no ministry, no true Church,' with charity and rational views of the goodness and mercy of God.

The other class of Episcopalians, although they believe episcopacy to have been instituted by the Apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, yet do not consider it as essential to the *being* of a Church. Presbyterian Churches they consider as *very defective*, but not deprived of their Church character; as *excusable*, when episcopacy cannot be had, but *schismatical* when it can; as *irregular* and *unscriptural* in their ministry, but, by no means, devoid of a *valid* ministry. This class of Episcopalians have nothing to do with your supposed difficulty. As they do not unchurch dissenters from episcopacy, although they think them *blameable*, and in most cases *schismatical*; as they do not place them under *uncovenanted* mercy, they have the same channels of grace open to them that Episcopalians have, and, consequently, may be as good, or better than they, if they are placed in a more favourable situation. It is then only the first class of Episcopalians that are affected by what you deem a difficulty of no easy solution. But whether it be a difficulty or not, you should remember, that the Westminster divines and yourself are as much affected by it, in reference to the Quakers and other mystic Christians, as the first class of Episcopalians are with respect to Presbyterians. If you will, therefore, extricate yourself, and they like your mode of doing it better than their own, no doubt they will adopt it; but until you do, depend upon it, they will not think it very modest in you to call upon them to solve a difficulty, in which you are as deeply involved as they are. These arguments are partly *ad hominem*, and partly *ad verecundiam*.

The first class of Episcopalians, whatever may be said for the correctness of their principles, are, at least, very consistent. They set out precisely on the same ground with the Westminster divines—'no ministry, no true Church.' If, then, episcopacy be a divine institution, and none but Bishops can communicate the sacerdotal character, it follows inevitably that there can be no ministry without them, and, consequently, without them no true Church. This is the mode of reasoning of this class of Churchmen; and perhaps it is not so easy to answer it, as those must suppose who reject the principle upon which it is founded.

Be that as it may, it is exactly the reasoning of the Westminster divines, and of yourself, Sir. You say,[a] 'It is only as far as *any* succession flows through the line of Presbyters, that it is either regular or valid. It is the *laying on of the hands of the presbytery* that constitutes a scriptural ordination.' Consequently, without the imposition of the hands of Presbyters, there can be no ministry; and without a ministry, there can be no true Church. And none but those who belong to the *visible* Church are entitled to *covenant* privileges. Therefore, the Quakers and some others, who have no ministry ordained by *laying on of the hands of the presbyters*, are completely unchurched. I cannot conceive, Sir, how it is possible for you to evade this consequence; and if you cannot, how strange is it for you to propose a difficulty, which, if it be really such, bears with all its force upon you, as much as upon those Episcopalians who unchurch Presbyterians! But the other class of Episcopalians (as has been already observed) stand entirely clear of this difficulty, because their principles have nothing *exclusive* in them, at least in their view of the matter, and, consequently, they place episcopal regimen on a more liberal footing than you do presbyterian; for they exclude nobody from visible Church membership, but you exclude Quakers and all those who have not a ministry ordained by the imposition *of the hands of the presbytery*. And as you assert, that nineteen Episcopalians out of twenty, are of the second class, then it follows upon your own concession, that in that proportion, Churchmen are more liberal than genuine, consistent Presbyterians. Well, Sir, be it so, I have no objection.

Without attempting to determine which of the two classes of Episcopalians is right, that which totally unchurches all denominations which have not Bishops, or that which, while they maintain the apostolic institution of episcopacy, do, nevertheless, in certain cases, admit the *validity* of presbyterian ordination, but in no case its *regularity*, I shall but just observe, that even on the first and highest ground, you cannot, with the least consistency, or modesty, make any objection. If they make episcopacy essential to the *being* of a Church, so do you a ministry ordained by the hands of the presbytery. If they are at a loss to solve the difficulty, how it is that God confers his grace as freely upon those who are not members of the visible Church, as upon those who are, you are equally at a loss. But if you can solve this difficulty, so can they in the very same manner. How then is it, Sir, that you could have so lost sight of consistency and propriety, as to have indulged yourself in such language as you have, towards those, as they are commonly styled, high-flying Churchmen? You place their principles upon a level with the worship of images, and exhort your people to exercise patience towards those deluded bigots; not considering that you were at

[a] Page 347.

the same time involving yourself in the same condemnation. The Quaker, Sir, can treat you in the same complimentary manner with at least as much propriety, and as good a grace, as you treat Episcopalians. I sincerely wish, Sir, that a number of expressions in your letters had been forborne. They savour too much of bitterness, and of that bigotry of which you complain in others.

But, Sir, after all, what is this mighty difficulty, which is to deter Episcopalians from asserting that there cannot be such a Church as CHRIST constituted, without episcopal authority? Do those Episcopalians thereby exclude Presbyterians from salvation? Far, very far from it. They declare most readily, and delight in the thought, that their piety will be accepted. Surely, Sir, you know this. How then could you say, that 'such persons are to be viewed in the same light with those who *conscientiously* believe—that there is no salvation out of the pale of the Church of Rome?' Are those who extend salvation to all denominations of Christians, and even to the very Heathen, to be abused as bigots, and ranked with those who confine it to a particular pale? Is such *extensive charity* to be put upon a *footing* with such *contracted bigotry?* Are those who ascribe sincerity to the piety of others, and purity to their motives, to be ranked with those who admit no purity, and of consequence, no salvation out of their own Church? Surely, Sir, you could not have been under the influence of the usual benevolent pulse of your heart, when you gave way to such feelings, nor of the usual dictates of your good sense, when you uttered such expressions. But you must be excused, as you had a difficult task on hand; for certainly it is difficult to give plausibility to error, and to truth the appearance of falsehood.

However difficult you may think it is to account for the ALMIGHTY'S extending his grace to those who are in fundamental error, yet as the fact is certain that he does extend it, we ought not to be too curious in our inquiries into his conduct. *The Judge of all the earth will do right.* He has given his Church such a constitution as he saw fit, and it is our duty to conform to it. If we err, and our error be not wilful, he will make due allowances for our honest misconception; but we have no right to call that a Christian Church which is materially different from the one he has constituted by his HOLY SPIRIT. Still he *may* and *does* extend his grace and mercy to such Christians. *We* are bound, but *his grace* is free. This is the language of the first class of Episcopalians.

I fear that I have been too prolix upon this point; but I believe it was necessary to show how inconsistent you are in this part of the discussion, and how unreasonable in expecting from Episcopalians a sacrifice of what they deem truth, because the consequences bear hard upon others. If they are correct in their views of the Christian Church, the consequences, whatever they may be, are not of their making. Let those look to that, who have deviated from a divine institution.

Thus, then, I think it appears, that those who carry episcopacy so far as to pronounce your ministry invalid, and, in consequence, your Church fundamentally deficient in her regimen, carry the matter no further with you, than you do with the Quakers; and, therefore, you cannot, with any consistency, find fault with them. And as to any difficulty that you may think attends the carrying of *episcopacy* to such a length, the very same difficulty attends the divine right of *presbytery*, when carried into all its consequences. You must, therefore, either give up this mode of assailing episcopacy, or you must change your principles. Consistency requires that you should do one or the other.

I now proceed to consider a few more passages in your concluding letter.

You say, 'The efficacy of episcopal government in securing the unity of the Church, in guarding against schism, and in promoting harmony and peace, has been much celebrated. But is there such a peculiar and benign efficacy in that form of ecclesiastical order? I am willing to refer the decision of this question to any man who is acquainted with ecclesiastical history. If we consult Eusebius, he will present us with a picture of the violence, the strife, and the divisions among Bishops, and among different portions of the Church, through their means, which is enough to make a Christian weep. If we consult Gregory Nazianzen, he will tell us, in language before quoted, that Prelacy 'has caused many fruitless conflicts and bruises,' &c. If we examine the history of any episcopal Church on earth, we shall find it exhibiting, to say the least, as large a share of heresy, contention, and schism, as any which bears the Presbyterian form; and what is more, we shall ever find the prelates themselves quite as forward as any others in scenes of violence and outrage.'[f]

All this, Sir, is free enough to be sure; and rather out of the common way of proceeding. When men are charged with violence, and a contentious spirit, and when it is said, either expressly, or by implication, that the office they bear has a tendency to cherish that spirit, every reasonable man would expect such proofs as would justify these bold assertions. But you give us none at all; not so much as a single passage from any of the ancient historians. You indeed say, that you are willing to have the matter tried by ecclesiastical history; but as you adduce no instances of the violence you talk so much about, it is hard to be obliged to look over many folio volumes in Greek and Latin, to pick up against ourselves instances of misbehaviour in Bishops. I hope, Sir, you do not expect this. Well, then, if such a demand would be highly unreasonable, I will take another method, and give you a sufficient number of instances of heresies, schisms, and contentions by Presbyters and Deacons, when Bishops had no other concern with them, than that of making a

f Page 337, 338.

faithful and zealous opposition to them. And upon this subject, very fortunately, I shall have no trouble; for I find it all done to my hand in a sufficient degree by Dr. Maurice, in his masterly answer to Baxter. I shall select from the Doctor's *Vindication of the primitive Church*, several instances, which, if they will not make you 'weep,' will at least make you sorry—*that Bishops were not the authors of them.* And if this will not defeat you in this mode of attack, I will freely acknowledge my error; and, as a penance for it, I will enjoin upon myself to read your book over again.

First, then: All ecclesiastical writers agree, that Simon Magus was the author of the first heresy in the Christian Church. You will not say, I presume, that *Simon* was a Bishop. He *wished* indeed to be invested with that character, and for that purpose offered a sum of money to the Apostles. But they were too honest to be bribed by his offer. *Thy money perish with thee*, was their reply.

The next heretic we read of, was Menander;[g] but no mortal ever asserted that he was a Bishop.

Saturninus and Basilides are the next in order. But neither of them was a Bishop, nor of any other order in the Church that we know of.[h]

Next in the list, is the heresy of the Nicolaitans. This is generally ascribed to Nicolas the Deacon. So say Irenæus and Epiphanius.[i] This, however, is disputed. Be it as it may, he certainly was no Bishop.

The Gnostics also had no Bishop for their founder and promoter. Carpocrates was a leading man among them; but he was never invested with apostolical episcopacy.[k]

Cerinthus, Ebion, Valentinus, Secundus, Epiphanes, Isidorus, Ptolemæus, and Marcus, were no Bishops; nor were Colarbasius, Heracleon, and Cerdo.

The thirty-ninth Christian sect in Epiphanius is that of the Cathari, or Puritans. Novatius, an African Presbyter, was the author of this sect; and he seduced Novatianus, a Roman Presbyter, to join with him against his Bishop.[l]

Theodotus, or Theodotion, was a learned man, and orthodox at first; and so was Bardesanes Syrus; but neither of them was a Bishop.

Montanus became the author of an impious heresy, because he could not obtain the episcopal character. He blasphemously declared that he was the HOLY GHOST.[m]

The first heretical Bishop that we meet with in ecclesiastical history, is Paulus Samosatenus, who succeeded Demetrianus in the see of Antioch, in the year 262, and who fell into heresy in the year 267. Here is a long space of time, more than two hundred years, and not one Bishop can be produced who was

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g EPIPHANII *Hær.* 22. h IRENÆUS, lib. i. chap. 22, 23. i *Hær.* 25.
k CLEM. ALEX. lib. vi. l EPIPH.—AUG.—PHILAST. m EUSEB. *in Chron.*

the author of any heresy. But in that time, we find a few Presbyters, one Deacon, and several laymen, who were authors of heresies.

This Paulus was a bad man as to his morals, and very heterodox as to his faith. He taught that CHRIST was not GOD.[n] But he was not the first that taught this doctrine. Artemas and Theodotus taught it before him.[o] Now, Sir, be careful to put Paulus on your list of heretical Bishops; but, at the same time, remember that he was deposed by a council of Bishops. Theodotus, too, who was a Presbyter, was not suffered to remain in the Catholic Church. He was excommunicated by Victor, Bishop of Rome.

We have now, Sir, enumerated the principal heresies which sprang up in the Christian Church, for the first three hundred years, and in all that time, we find, among many thousand Bishops, but one heretic. This is really very wonderful. If any man wished to ascertain the state of Christian doctrine during that period, what better proof could he have of its purity, than this remarkable coincidence of principle among the governors of the Church? There is nothing like this to be produced in modern times, of which some people talk in such high strains of panegyric. Now, from a general prevalence of purity of doctrine, we may very reasonably infer purity of morals; otherwise, what advantage has truth over error? Add to this the dreadful persecution of Christians during this period, and we may safely pronounce, without inquiring into the fact, that the three first centuries were the golden period of the Church. What then shall we say to your picture of it? I do not hesitate to say, that it is a perfect caricature.

The following ages, it must be acknowledged, were not so pure. The early part of the fourth century was very afflictive to the Church, in consequence of heresy and schism, which always destroy its peace. Meletius, an Egyptian Bishop, the first of that order who began a schism, forsook the communion of the Church, because, according to Epiphanius, those who fell from the faith under persecution, were received into it. But Athanasius tells the story differently. He says, that this Bishop had himself denied the faith, and being condemned by a synod of Bishops, he became a schismatic.

About the same time sprang up the Donatists, who, if Optatus be right, owed their origin to two Presbyters, Botrus and Celeusius; although they were named from Donatus, one of their Bishops, who lived a good while after the rise of that faction.[p]

But the sect that most afflicted the Church in the fourth century, was that of the Arians; so called from Arius, who, by good providence, was no more than a Presbyter. He taught that CHRIST was not of the same substance with the FATHER, and that he was not eternal. This doctrine first divided the

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n EUSEB. lib. vii. chap. 30. o EPIPHAN. &c. p AUGUST. *Her.*

Church of Alexandria, and then all the world; a few Bishops adopting his notion, but by far the greater part opposing it. At length a general council was called, by which Arius was condemned; and out of nearly three hundred Bishops, but seventeen took his part, and but five of them refused to sign the decrees of the council.[q]

Constantius succeeded his father in the East, and being a friend to the Arians, that heresy gained ground to a great degree. The Bishops, who were generally opposed to it, were deposed and banished, and the sees filled with Arians. It was in this state of things that so much contention arose among the Bishops of the Church. The Arian Bishops, supported by the Emperor, persecuted the orthodox Bishops; while these, as was their duty, strenuously opposed their heretical adversaries. Hence arose that confusion and violence, which Gregory Nazianzen speaks of as existing in the councils of that age. Not *Prelacy*, as you would have your readers believe, but *heresy*, was the principal cause of it; and if the Bishops could have had their wish, or if their efforts had been successful, the Church would not have experienced the miseries which resulted from that pestilent sect.

The sects that sprang out of Arianism were, most of them, begun by those that were not Bishops. Ætius was no more than a Deacon.[r] Eunomius and Macedonius were heresiarchs long before they were Bishops. The prevalence of Arianism, under an Arian Emperor, placed them in episcopal chairs.[s]

Another improver of Arianism, and leader of a new sect, was Aërius. He was no Bishop. His fellow student, Eustathius, being raised to that office in preference to him, the disappointment rankled in his breast, and he began to disparage the apostolic order. "He was," says Dr. Maurice, "the Cartwright of those times, and the father of the presbyterian parity—a notion brought into the world by the ambitious discontent of one, who, when he could not be a Bishop himself, yet scorned to seem inferior to any Bishop."

The Audians were a sect which sprang up about the same time with the Arians, headed by one Audius, an *Anthropomorphite;* but he was no Bishop, till he had made a schism, and then he was made a Bishop by his own party.[t]

The Priscillianists, who were a mixture of Manichees and Gnostics, sprang up in the West; but their author was not a Bishop. Marcus is supposed to have been the founder of it; but it does not appear that he had any clerical character. Priscillian, his scholar, gave name to the sect; but he was no more than a layman, when he was condemned by the council of Saragossa.[u]

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q SOCRATIS *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. 6. and SOZOMEN. *Hist. Eccles.* lib i. cap. 21.
r SOZOMEN. lib. iii. 18. SOCRAT. lib. ii.
s SOCRAT. lib. iv. cap. 7. ATHANASII *Apologia* 2.
t EPIPHANII *Hæres.* 71. u SEVERI *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. in fin.

The Pelagian heresy had no Bishop, either for its author or promoter. Pelagius, who gave it being, was a monk; and Julianus and Celestius, his diciples, were never Bishops.[v]

Eutyches was no Bishop, but a monk. This heresy prevailed chiefly among the Eastern monks, who made great disturbances about it after the council of Chalcedon.

The heresy of the Monothelites was an unavoidable consequence of the doctrine of Eutyches. This heresy is fathered upon Cyrus, Bishop of Alexandria, who seduced two other Bishops into his opinion. But this departure from Catholic doctrine made no great progress, having met with great opposition from the episcopal college.

These were the principal heresies of the first five or six centuries; and we see that no blame can be attached to the Bishops; but, on the contrary, that they are deserving of the highest commendation.

"But now," says Dr. Maurice, "because the devil had another game to play, and started up but few heresies until those last ages; let us see what sort of men the authors of them have been. The Swenkfeldians, Anabaptists, Mennonists, the Family of Love, Quakers, Ranters, and the rest of the modern sects; did these derive themselves from any Bishops? Servetus, was he a Bishop? Or Socinus? Or were the Racovian divines a Council of Bishops?"[w] Were Luther and Carolostadius Bishops? It is well known they were not. Yet they could quarrel, and disgrace the reformation by their incessant jarring. The latter was at last banished by the Elector of Saxony, at the instigation of Luther. Bishops had nothing to do with these contentions, which are enough to make a Christian 'weep.'

Let us now see how it was in the Church of Geneva, that paragon of ecclesiastical regimen.

Calvin, the founder of ministerial parity, was endowed by nature with great talents. But he was *a man*. His new scheme of ministers upon equal ground, with a mixture of Ruling Elders, was to do wonders. But, were his expectations realized? No; Geneva was soon torn with factions, and this gentle system of parity became the source of much contention. Calvin was rewarded for his services with banishment; but after sometime he was restored, and a new trial given to *parity*. It appears from his own letters, that the Church in that city was miserably distracted, although there was not a Bishop within its atmosphere. The return of Calvin evinced again the *gentle* sway of presbytery. Castellio, a man of great learning, was soon expelled, at the instigation of the reformer. A violent contest then took place between him and the senate about the election of a minister. It produced almost sedition. Calvin's quarrels with Perinus proceeded to such a length, that the council became furious against one another. And what do you think was the

v AUGUSTIN. *Hær.* 88.

w *Vindication of Ch. Gov.* p. 303.

cause of it? Why, Perinus thought it was no harm to recreate himself now and then with dancing. But Calvin, although no Bishop, played the tyrant, and forbad that amusement upon pain of excommunication. Perinus was not to be treated in that manner. He opposed such tyranny; and two of the ministers who joined with him were turned out of their livings. The contention became general throughout the city, and the common council taking different sides, almost cut one another's throats. Many more instances of tumults might be adduced as proofs of the *gentleness* of parity. One person was put to death for libelling Calvin. Another was banished the city for preaching against predestination. Servetus was burned for heresy. So much for the mother church of presbytery.

Switzerland also fared no better under this *parity* regimen, Dr. Maurice says, "Erastus having published his *Theses* of excommunication, was confuted by Beza; yet there remained still several ministers dissatisfied; as Bullinger, Gualter, and divers others. This occasioned very great jealousies between the several parties, and it had almost come to a rupture. The Churches of the Palatinate were no less shaken with this new controversy, and the zealots for this government and discipline took all occasions publicly to maintain them; but the prudence of the Prince prevented the mischiefs which threatened his Churches from this question. Bullinger, in a letter dated March 10, 1574, and Gaulter, in some letters of his to the Bishops of London and Ely, and several other eye witnesses, do sufficiently testify the lamentable condition of those reformed Churches, and the confusion which presbyterian government brought upon them."[x]

The Geneva platform was adopted by the reformed in France. The constant persecution that Church was under, and the bloody wars they had to maintain with the Catholics, kept them, of necessity, more united than their neighbours. But notwithstanding the heavy pressure upon them, *parity* could not preserve them in peace. New and dangerous opinions in religion were continually started, and it required all the exertions of the prudent Du Plessis, and a few more of his character, to keep the Church in any tolerable degree of tranquillity.

Holland, too, where *parity* reigned in perfection, and the face of a Bishop was not to be seen, exhibited a sad scene of distraction. "The Church government of that country," says Dr. Maurice, "was not established without great trouble and difficulty, and occasioned no small disturbance."[y] The civil magistrates, and the ministry, were constantly at variance. Synod after synod was convened, and they did more harm than good. If these synods had been episcopal, we should have heard enough about their contentions; but, by good fortune, they were all composed of *parity* men.

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x *Vindication*, p. 378, 379.

y Ibid. p. 184.

But these disputes were not of great moment, in comparison of what followed. The Arminian schism threw that Church into violent convulsions. For several years there was nothing but conference after conference, and synod after synod. At last it came to tumult, and sedition, and bloodshed. A general synod was then resolved on: it met at Dort. The Remonstrants were condemned, and these poor people, among whom were some of the most learned men of the age, were treated with the greatest severity. Some of the ministers who would not subscribe, were banished, and some were imprisoned. In short, it was a sad scene. This business was conducted, not under episcopal regimen, but under the *mild* sway of presbytery.

"And as these presbyterian Churches have been afflicted with schisms and contentions, so they have been sensible of the mischiefs of heresy. In them, ministers have no great revenues, nor dignities, nor power, and there are no Bishops; and yet heresies make a shift to thrive. Arians, Socinians, Mennonists, and others, abound, and are pertinacious."[1]

But, perhaps, there is no Church which has felt the mischiefs of *parity* more than that of Scotland. "The concord of that Church," says my author, "was much greater while it continued under Superintendents and Bishops, than it has been since Andrew Melvil disturbed it with the perfection of the Geneva discipline and government. What schisms there arose in the late times between the disciplinarians and the rest, and what disturbances the same sort of men have given of late, is too well known to need a relation, and the field conventicles still witness."[2] It is utterly inconsistent with historical truth to give the least intimation that the 'unity of the Church' is preserved by presbyterian regimen. "Is this proof," asks Dr. Hobart, "to be found in the almost infinite number of sects, which sprang from presbytery in the time of Oliver Cromwell? Or does this proof exist in the state of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, or in this country? In Scotland, the Seceders are a numerous body, who separated from the *parent Church*, charging her with being a corrupt Church. We find there that presbyterian government did not preserve the visible unity of the Church. Was unity preserved among the Seceders, who carried with them presbyterian government, perfect equality of rank among ministers? In the space of a few years after the secession, they split into the two sects of Burghers and Anti-Burghers; the former so called from submitting to what is called the *Burgher oath*, which the latter refuse to take, as inconsistent with the principles of the secession. Here then are three distinct Presbyterian Churches, who formally excommunicated one another, and disclaim all church fellowship. Admirable specimen of the efficacy of presbyterian government in preserving the visible unity of the Church! But this is not all. In

1 MAURICE, *Vindication*, p. 390, 391. 2 *Vindication*, p. 396.

Scotland, there is a fourth Presbyterian Church, called the *Relief Church*, so denominated from their having *relieved* themselves from the *patronage* by which livings are conferred in the established Church. And last, though not least of all, the *Reformed Presbyterian Church*, commonly called *Covenanters*, who boast that they alone maintain the genuine presbyterian principles, and are the *purest Church* on the face of the earth."[b]

"Nearly the same divisions are found among Presbyterians in this country, as subsist in Scotland. There are several denominations of them professing subjection to distinct ecclesiastical judicatories, and some of them refusing church fellowship with the others."[c] There are also numerous congregations in New-England, who are, as to ordination, presbyterian, although as to government *Congregational;* and they also have had frequent contentions and numerous schisms. So that look where we will, since the reformation, and we shall find *parity* the fruitful source of confusion in the Church. No government indeed can prevent this altogether. The nature of man is so depraved; he is so much under the sway of pride, and selfishness, and obstinacy, that *offences* of this sort *must come*. But some governments, in their very nature, are better calculated to preserve peace, and prevent schism, than others. That appears to me to be strikingly the case with the episcopal regimen. Look at the episcopal Church in this country, and you will find it one in its form, in its ordination, and in its worship. It is the same in England, in Ireland, in Scotland, and in Sweden and Denmark. What an inestimable advantage is this! If a schism *should* take place, it is a difficult matter to induce a Bishop to violate the unity of the Church. In countries where there is an establishment, it scarcely ever occurs; and even where there is no establishment, the degradation and loss of character that ensue, and the almost impracticability of preserving the succession, are deterring circumstances. But among Presbyterians these things are continually occurring. A turbulent man can at any time make a schism, and as there is not the least difficulty with respect to ordination, a presbytery of some sort or other being easily formed, the circumstance which is attended with so much difficulty to Episcopalians, who are disposed to be schismatical, is not attended with the slightest inconvenience to Presbyterian schismatics. *They* may be schismatics, and Presbyterians still. But when Episcopalians are guilty of schism, they scarcely ever retain that character, but in almost every instance have recourse to ordination by Presbyters. This is not an imaginary advantage which the episcopal regimen possesses. Look at the episcopal Churches throughout the world, and it will be found to be a matter of fact, that where episcopacy is abandoned, there schisms and sects spring up like mushrooms. When, in the seventeenth

b *Apology*, p. 221, 222. c Ibid. p. 222, 224.

century, that apostolical regimen was abolished in England, upwards of sixty different sects, according to Edwards, a Presbyterian divine, distracted that unhappy country. But as soon as episcopacy was restored, they gradually died away, and left behind them but five or six of the more decent and sober kind. In Scotland, too, it was pretty much in the same way. As soon as Melvil got his favourite Geneva platform introduced, schisms began, and they have not ended to this day; and what is more, never will, as long as *parity* prevails.

When we attend to the operations of our own minds, we find them almost intuitively admitting the expediency of superior ranks in communities of every kind. What has always been the common sentiment, and the common practice of the world, must be correct. In matters of taste, in moral principles, and in political science, it is allowed to be so. Why is nature, and the common sense of mankind, to be violated in the government of the Christian Church? We do not cease to be *men* as soon as we become *Christians*. There is enough of pride, ambition, and perverseness, in both priests and people, to need all those checks which the wisdom of ages has found necessary, to preserve peace and harmony in religious communities. History is uniform in her report upon this subject. The religion of the Patriarchs, of the Jews, of the Greeks and Romans, of the Persians, of the Egyptians, of the Druids, of the Mahometans, in short, of every nation that deserves to be so called, had its superior and inferior priests; and we know, that in one instance the ALMIGHTY expressly enjoined this gradation. If, then, the common sense of mankind be considered as a sure test of truth; if the experience of ages has sanctioned imparity in the ministers of religion; if GOD himself expressed his approbation of it, by establishing it among his peculiar people, the Jews; we may very reasonably conclude, that JESUS CHRIST would not act in direct opposition to the voice of nature, to the common sense of mankind, and to the example set him by his Heavenly Father. And when we add to these *analogical* and *a priori* arguments, the accumulated evidence that has been adduced in proof of the *fact*, I see not what there is wanting to convince an unprejudiced mind, that episcopacy is an apostolical and divine institution.

One more letter, Sir, and I shall take my leave of this subject for the present.

LETTER XXI.

REV. SIR:

You go on in the same strain of unqualified invective against Bishops; not recollecting that every thing with which you charge them, may be retorted upon presbytery in a tenfold degree. You say, 'If we examine the history of any episcopal Church on earth, we shall find it exhibiting, to say the least, as large a share of heresy, contention, and schism, as any which bears the presbyterian form; and, what is more, we shall ever find the Prelates themselves quite as forward as any others, in scenes of violence and outrage.'

These charges could not have proceeded from a proper motive. If they were even well founded, they ought not to have been advanced. Religion can derive no benefit from criminations of this kind, nor did your argument require the introduction of the subject. I fear you were not under the influence of your usual meekness of spirit, when you committed to paper several passages in your book. With an appearance of much candour and moderation, every now and then expressions dropped from your pen, which show that all is not right. I am sorry to make these observations; but when a man advances ill-founded, and at the same time severe things, he has no right to expect that they will be passed over in silence.

Before you indulged yourself in charges of this serious nature, you ought to have refreshed your memory with a perusal of the history of the Christian Church. If you had, you would have found but one Bishop a heretic for the first three hundred years; and very few, in any age, in comparison of Presbyters and laymen. And as to violence and outrage, I am totally at a loss to determine what you mean, and at what Church you point. I cannot think that you have our Church in view, or the moderate Church of England, or of Ireland, or the episcopal Church in Scotland, or the Church of Sweden, or of Denmark, or of the Moravians. What, Sir, do you mean? When you tell us, you will most probably receive an answer.

I have, in the course of this discussion, several times expressed my astonishment at your manner of quoting authors, and at your wide departure from well authenticated facts. You give us another instance. You inform us, that Eusebius gives a sad picture of the divisions among Bishops; but you take care not to tell us in what part of his history that picture is to be found. I have looked over his account of the state of the Church in the early part of the fourth century; and so far from finding a great corruption of morals, I am astonished at the faith and patience displayed by all ranks of Christians, under sufferings the most appalling to human nature. Among these Christians, he gives a long list of illustrious Bishops, who endured the most excru-

ciating tortures, rather than renounce their GOD and SAVIOUR. Read, Sir, his account of the Diocesian persecution, and perhaps you will feel in your heart some tenderness, even for Bishops.

You have given us, Sir, a very unwarrantable account of the Nicene Council; and to have some colour for your representation, you say in a note,[a] that Gregory Nazianzen 'speaks of the unprincipled ambition and shameful conduct of the clergy of that council.' When I see the passage which gives that information, I shall not be disposed to doubt that it is to be found in the works of Gregory; but then I shall oppose to it the account which Eusebius gives us of that council. He was a member of the council, and must, therefore, have known more about it than Gregory, who lived fifty years after the event. Eusebius says nothing, that I can find, about 'unprincipled ambition and shameful conduct.' If you will consult the thirteenth Chapter of the third Book; you will find that nothing occurred inconsistent with gravity and decorum. He mentions, indeed, an undue degree of warmth that appeared in some of the members, and some instances of personal reflections, which the Emperor, who was present, immediately checked. Arianism, and the time of keeping Easter, were the most material points debated in that council, and the first in particular was very interesting; of course it would excite warmth, and warmth generally produces improprieties; but none occurred, according to Eusebius, but what the subjects, and the number of the members present, would naturally produce; none that would justify your assertion, that the clergy of that council were men of 'unprincipled ambition, and shameful conduct.'

When I read the account which Eusebius has given of that council, and the canons which were made by it, I cannot perceive in your representation, the least trace of moderation, or conformity to facts. I should think that men who could enact such canons as the following, must be pure themselves, and very zealous to promote purity in others. The second canon ordains, that "those who shall be convicted of any crime, shall be deprived of their ecclesiastical functions." The third forbids "Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and other clergymen, to keep women in the house with them, excepting those of whom there can be no suspicion." The ninth ordains, "that those Priests shall be degraded, who are found either to have sacrificed, or to have been guilty of other crimes before their ordination." The fifteenth forbids "the translation of Bishops and Priests," and ordains, "that those who shall be translated, shall return to their first Church." The seventeenth ordains "that clergymen who are usurers, or who take sordid gain, shall be deposed."[b] These canons look as if the Bishops of that council were men of virtue and religion, and not ambitious and unprincipled, as you represent them. Add to this, that they had but lately come out of a most dreadful

a Page 330.

b Du Pin's Eccles. Hist. Vol. 2. p. 252, 253.

persecution, which generally purifies both priests and people; and then there can be no doubt that you have given a grossly erroneous account of the council of Nice, and the Bishops of the early part of the fourth century.

I should not, Sir, take any notice of your quotation from Dr. Owen, were it not to show your readers how strangely you have hooked yourself upon one of the horns of a dilemma. "The first express attempt," says the learned Dr. Owen, "to corrupt and divide a Church, made from within itself, was that in the Church of Jerusalem, made by Thebulis, because Simon Cleopas was chosen Bishop, and he was refused. The same rise had the schisms of the Novatians and Donatists, the heresies of Arius and others." Now, Simon Cleopas was either a *diocesan*, or a *congregational* Bishop. If a *diocesan*, then you give up the point, and acknowledge that kind of episcopacy to be an apostolical institution. If a *congregational* Bishop, then I would be glad to know, what the conduct of Thebulis has to do with *diocesan* episcopacy? Dr. Owen may have been a *learned man;* but if this specimen be any proof, he was not a *reasoner*. And how you could so far forget yourself as to quote with approbation a passage, which implies either a dereliction of your hypothesis, or a circumstance, which, if it has any force, lies entirely against yourself, can be accounted for in no other way, than by supposing that your zeal obscured your understanding.

What you say from page 339 to 341, is only a repetition of what you say in the first part of the letter; to which I have made a reply in my last. But it may be well to take notice of your mode of answering an obvious objection to your reasoning. Your position is, that those who belong to a true, visible Church, ought to be better than those who do not. To this I have shown, that the Quaker can talk precisely in the same manner with respect to Presbyterians, that you do with respect to Episcopalians; and that there is no possible way for you to break the force of the retort. This alone is quite sufficient to impose silence upon you, without adding another syllable; for the reasoning of the Quaker, upon the Presbyterian principle, "no ministry, no true Church," is perfectly logical. But other modes of reasoning may be adopted by us. I ask you, how do you determine that the members of our Church, when placed in equally favourable circumstances, are not better than the members of your Church? Will you say, I can see with my eyes and hear with my ears, and cannot perceive that they are a tittle better than we? But, Sir, have we not eyes and ears as well as you? And are they not as good as yours? Now, suppose their report should be that we *are* better than you, what would you say to it? I cannot see what, but that *you do not* think so. But suppose *we do*, who is to decide the point? Can any created being do it? I believe not.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood upon this point. I make

no claim for Episcopalians to superior goodness. I only put the matter upon this ground for the sake of argument; and to show the weakness of what you seem to think conclusive reasoning. In truth, the whole is mere assumption.

Another mode of reasoning used by us is, that there may be very correct principles, and yet not a suitable practice. But you say, this 'is merely an evasion of the argument.' And again: 'We contend that there is, and must ever be, *more* virtue and holiness *in* the Church of CHRIST, than *out* of it.' Then it will follow, as you unchurch the Quakers by making a *ministry* essential to a *true Church*, that the objection in the mouth of a Quaker against you, is as strong as the same objection in the mouth of a Presbyterian against us. You ought then in reason to satisfy the Quaker, before you demand of us to satisfy you.

You go on—'Nor do we, by taking this ground, furnish either an infidel or an heretic with a handle against us.' Why not? Because, 'as long as he could only with truth say, *Some* of you, Christians, are as bad as infidels; I would confidently reply, they are not Christians but *hypocrites;* for if they had any portion of the spirit of their Master, they would not act thus. But if he could really make it appear that Christians are *in general*, and *as a body*, in no respect better than infidels, he would certainly establish his argument.' And do you really think, Sir, that these are parallel cases? Is there no difference between infidels and professing Christians who have no *valid* ministry? Have not these the Bible to regulate their principles, and improve them in virtue and piety? Infidels reject this source of information altogether. They therefore can have no knowledge of GOD, but by their own unassisted reason; and what a fallible guide that is, the history of mankind sufficiently evinces. Were a Christian in a situation, in which he could not attend any public worship, but had to rely entirely upon his Bible for instruction, we might reasonably suppose that he would be a better man than the infidel, who rejects that source of instruction. Otherwise, what advantage has good instruction over bad? What advantage has revelation over reason? In that book he would find that *the wrath of* GOD, *is revealed against all unrighteousness;* that *remission of sins is preached in the name of* JESUS CHRIST, and in no other name whatever. Would not this (the blessing of GOD attending it) have a powerful tendency to raise him from *a death of sin to a life of righteousness?* It certainly would. But the infidel, by rejecting the Bible, foregoes this inestimable advantage. He trusts to his own fallible reason, which can never assure him, that, were he even to repent of his past transgressions, and live righteously for the future, this would recommend him to the favour of GOD, and give him a reasonable hope of eternal happiness. Reason never produced this conviction in the minds of the Heathen. They were *without hope, and without* GOD *in the world.* Here there is a striking difference between the case

of the infidel and that of the Christian, although the latter were in a situation in which he could not attend any kind of public instruction and worship. But when the Christian regularly attends public worship, although the ministers who officiate have not received a *valid* ministry, yet the benefit of joining in the prayers and praises of a religious assembly, and the moral and religious lessons that are taught from the pulpit, must, in reason, be considered as very great.

Still farther. In a Church in which there is not a Scriptural and valid ministry, both those who administer what are deemed sacraments, and those who receive them, may receive considerable benefit from them. And as the ministers who officiate sincerely believe that they have a right to do so, and the people also have the same persuasion, there can be no doubt, that a GOD of mercy will pardon their involuntary error, and dispense that grace to their well meant endeavour to do his will, which is not attached by promise to unwarranted administrations. If you should not deem these observations satisfactory, you will be under the necessity of excluding from divine grace and mercy, those Christians who have no ministry.

Once more, Sir—The whole of your reasoning upon this point appears to me to rest upon a false foundation. It supposes that the ministry is of the essence of religion. There may be, and we know there is, faith in CHRIST, and love to GOD and man, which are the essentials of Christianity, where there is no ministry. A ministry is, in my opinion, essential to a *visible* Church. In this I believe Episcopalians and Presbyterians are generally agreed. It is, therefore, of great importance to preserve it. What GOD has appointed, no man, no Church has a right to reject. Still some good people may be so unhappy as to err upon this point. Of the cause of their error we are not competent judges. We must leave them to him who judgeth righteously.

Upon the whole matter, in the words of Dr. Hobart, "HE who *worketh all things according to the council of his own will*, may dispense with his own institutions, and depart from the settled order of the economy of grace. It may please him to bless the *sincere* exertions and labours of those who reject the *positive institutions* and laws of his house. *He giveth not to man an account of his doings.* The inefficacy of these institutions on the lives of many, and the piety and holiness which others exhibit who reject them, may be trials of our *humility* and *submission*; tests, whether under these inauspicious appearances we may not arrogantly exclaim, 'To what purpose are these positive ordinances? We may be virtuous and pious without them?' Ah! let not the humble believer be seduced by this specious, but arrogant reasoning from the ways of GOD's appointment. It was this proud spirit which urged our first parents to violate a *positive institution* of the ALMIGHTY;

which lost them a paradise, and the fallen angels the glory of *their first estate.*"[c]

Thus, Sir, it appears to me, that there is no difficulty in answering fairly and solidly, the objection which you make to episcopacy, when carried so far as to unchurch all non-episcopalians. If we once adopt the principle, that we are not to admit any thing into our religious creed which bears hard upon others, I really do not know at what point we are to stop. I fear this principle will put all religions exactly upon a par. The serious and inquisitive mind will never be satisfied till it rests upon what it deems truth; and when once it is settled upon that ground, it will never be induced to relinquish it from any supposed or real inconvenience that may result from it to others. Were the contrary to be admitted, a ministry must be given up; for the consequence offends those who have none. Nay, Christianity must be given up; for it offends Jews, Turks, Idolaters, and Infidels of every kind.

This, Sir, or something like it, would be the answer to your imaginary difficulty, from that class of Episcopalians who pronounce the Presbyterian ministry absolutely invalid. The other class, although they place episcopacy upon the ground of apostolical and divine right, as well as the first; yet, not thinking that it necessarily unchurches others, are not at all concerned with your objection. This class then have the advantage of you (if there be any advantage in it;) for, by your doctrine, a ministry is made essential to a visible Church; and, consequently, you unchurch the Quakers, and some other mystical professors of Christianity.

But one more point now remains to be considered: it is the doctrine of *uninterrupted succession.* It is very evident to me, that although you admit the doctrine for the sake of argument, yet you do not believe it. If so, you are not a Presbyterian, for the Westminster divines, and all true Presbyterians, maintain that doctrine as strenuously as Episcopalians. Dr. Mason and Mr. M'Leod assert it most pointedly. I think, then, that they cannot possibly be pleased with this, and several other parts of your book. Were I a Presbyterian, I should certainly say, *non tali auxilio,* [I do not want such help;] for in my humble opinion, you have ruined the Presbyterian cause. Were it not too late in the discussion, and that I am heartily tired of the labour I have sustained, I would enter into a very minute detail of particulars; but, perhaps on some future occasion, I may be induced to do it. I have already said something upon the point in my thirteenth letter; but Mr. How has said a great deal more; and whoever reads his *masterly* performance with an attentive and impartial mind, will be satisfied that I am correct in my assertion.

The doctrine of *uninterrupted succession* appears to me to

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[c] *Apology*, page 248.

be capable of strict logical proof. In reasoning upon any point, there must be some allowed principle upon which the reasoning must ultimately rest; for we cannot go on adding argument to argument *ad infinitum* [without end.] The principle admitted in this case is this—no man has a right to act as an officer in CHRIST's kingdom, without a commission from him. The greatest enthusiast, as well as the most sober Christian, admits this to be reasonable, necessary, and scriptural. They differ only as to the manner in which the commission is conveyed. Let us now see whether we cannot rest our arguments in proof of uninterrupted succession upon this ground. If we can, the point must necessarily be considered as established.

There are but two ways pretended, in which a commission is conveyed from CHRIST to his ministers. The one is *ordinary*, the other *extraordinary*. The latter we have nothing to do with. In the first way, none can give a commission but those who are authorized by the commission they themselves bear, to commission others. This is undeniable. But the question is, To whom was this power of appointing stewards in CHRIST's household given? It must have been given either to the people or to ministers. We cannot possibly tell by our own reason, to whom CHRIST gave this power; we must, therefore, have recourse to revelation. Now, there is not one tittle in the whole book of GOD, which intimates that this power was given to the people: but, on the contrary, the original commission, and every transaction relating to a ministry, prove that none but ministers of some sort (it matters not what, as it relates to the present argument) have a right to ordain. They, then, who are ordained by laymen, cannot possibly derive a commission in this way from the great Head of the Church; of course, ordination *by ministers* must be the only scriptural mode. The New Testament shows this to have been the case. The Apostles were authorized by CHRIST to act in his name; and he promised to preserve in his Church to the end of time the authority which his commission conveyed. By virtue of this commission, the Apostles ordained others, as St. Paul did Timothy and Titus; and these officers committed the same commission to other faithful men; and thus a succession begun by CHRIST, and continued by his Apostles, and by those who succeeded to the authority contained in the original commission, has been preserved, under the special providence of CHRIST, who has bound himself to the Church, that a succession shall be preserved to the end of the world.

"The Christian Church" (to use the words of Dr. Chandler) "was thus originally constituted under officers of divine appointment, as evidently as the Jewish was; and Christians in the times of the Apostles, had no more right to set up an authority different from theirs, or in opposition to it, than the Israelites had in the rebellion of Korah, to gainsay Moses and Aaron in these very *popular* words: 'Ye take too much upon you, seeing

all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and *the* LORD *is among them;* wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?' Let it now be observed, that what were the rights of Christians in the Apostles' days, the very same, neither more nor less, are the rights of Christians at this day."[d] Consequently, as the power of ordaining was not lodged in the body diffusive, but in the hands of particular persons, it can be derived from the Apostles in no other way than by *personal* communication, or succession, in a line that has never been interrupted.

If then all authority in the Church is *mediately* derived from CHRIST, as all Presbyterians allow, an uninterrupted succession is an inevitable consequence, and is capable of demonstration. "If authority can be conveyed from CHRIST mediately, by a succession that is interrupted, there must be somewhere in the succession a person who can give that which he has not. If the authority first given to A, is to pass on successively to B, to C, to D, and to E; should the conveyance stop, or be interrupted at C, so that it passes not on to D; in that case D does not receive it, and, therefore, cannot convey it to E, unless D be able to give what it has not. Supposing the authority, when it comes down to C, to be annihilated, or to cease; unless it be renewed, E can never be invested with it. The question then is, who shall renew it? Now, all authority from CHRIST must flow from CHRIST; if it begins, and has its source short of him, it is not his authority. If he pleases to renew it, he may give it immediately to E, or he may give it to D, by him to be communicated to E; and in either way E may be invested with CHRIST's authority. But now let us suppose that any number of men upon earth, or that all the Angels in heaven, should attempt to renew the authority of CHRIST, once interrupted and lost; unless a stream can have a higher derivation than its source—unless these men, or these Angels can give what they have not—the thing is impossible. They may give what they have, they may give their *own* authority; but CHRIST's authority they cannot give, unless they have received it. And if they have received it, it is not they that renew the authority, but CHRIST himself."[e]

Thus then it appears to be capable of demonstration, that an uninterrupted succession of ministers is essential to the Christian Church; and that if there has been any failure, a ministry deriving its authority from CHRIST, has also failed. But this we know cannot be; for CHRIST has promised that it should not; and what he has promised, he is certainly able to fulfil.

And as the order of the clergy is a positive institution by the great Head of the Church, so the different degrees of the ministry must of necessity be a positive institution by the same authority. If, then, episcopacy has been proved to be a divine

d *Appeal further defended*, p. 81, 82, 83.
e CHANDLER'S *Appeal defended*, p. 60, 61.

institution, it as necessarily follows, that the succession of Bishops has been as uninterrupted as the ministry. For if to the order of Bishops the power of ordaining was attached, then it follows that the episcopal order is essential to the perpetuity of the ministry. Of course a succession of such ordainers is essential. Admit then, that episcopacy is a divine institution, and the succession is a matter of necessity, and is no more capable of failure than the ministry is. Being the law of GOD'S house, it must answer the purpose for which it was established. It is no solid objection to say, that the ministry is too much under the control of man to be susceptible of perpetuity, and uninterrupted succession. The will of man is as much under the control of the ALMIGHTY as the winds of heaven, or the ebbing and flowing of the tides. Were he to withdraw his influence from the creation, the law of nature, as it is called, would not prevent, for a moment, universal confusion. The law of GOD, whether it respects the creation, the moral system, or the positive institutions of the Church, must produce its effects; and although deviations may, for wise reasons, be permitted in the natural and moral world, and in the Church, yet the general effect intended to be produced by the original constitution, will infallibly take place; and every thing upon which the CREATOR has stamped perpetuity, will no doubt continue till his purposes shall be answered.

Thus I think it appears, both from reason and Scripture, that the uninterrupted succession of the ministry, and of consequence episcopacy, if it be a divine institution, is a necessary consequence of the original establishment; and that there is no more danger of its failing than there is of the Church failing. It may indeed be destroyed in particular situations; so may the Church also; and we know that in fact this has been the case; but so long as the sun and moon endure, so long will the Church and her ministry endure.

It is an objection that sometimes meets us, that an uninterrupted succession cannot be proved by written records. This is really very weak. We do not want records to prove the succession of the ministry. Its divine institution, and the promise to be with it to the end of the world, is a better proof of succession than a million of volumes would be. But although I deem this a sufficient answer to the objections, yet I will meet it another way: I say, then, that we have records, equal to those for a succession of the manuscripts of the Bible. Suppose, Sir, a Deist should ask—What proof can you give that the present Greek Testament is a faithful copy of the original Gospels and Epistles? Would you not tell him that it is a copy of the oldest Greek manuscripts now extant—that it has been compared with other versions, the Latin, the Syriac, the Arabic, the Persic, the Ethiopic, and that, for this, we have the testimony of the learned, which, from the nature of the case, is the only evidence we can have? If the Deist should proceed his inquiry, and ask again—

How do you know that the manuscripts, from which the present Greek Testament is taken, are genuine transcripts of more ancient manuscripts, and they again of still more ancient, till we reach the originals? To this you would say, We have the testimony of the learned in every age up to the apostolic. Add to this, that we find our present Greek Testament corresponding with innumerable passages in the writers of every age, from the first to the sixteenth century; and then you have the most complete evidence the case admits of, for the genuineness and authenticity of our present Greek copy. Just the same evidence we have for the succession of the ministry in every age. The testimony of a crowd of writers in every period of the Church declares it to be so; nay, the very existence of the Church proves it to be so; for a Church and a ministry always go together. The one cannot be supported, cannot exist, without the other. There may indeed have been false pretenders to the ministry in every age, as there have been false copies of the sacred writings; but both were rejected by the Church; the one condemned as forged, the other as invalid.

Notwithstanding the strong and invincible arguments that may be offered in support of the doctrine of *uninterrupted succession*, yet you inform us, that several writers have pronounced 'the claim of succession to be as futile as it is unnecessary; assailing it with the most pointed ridicule, as well as with formidable arguments.'

That several Presbyterians, Independents, Socinians, and even Episcopalians, have opposed the claim of succession, is undoubtedly as true as that several Deists have opposed the claim of revelation; and that they have attempted to ridicule what they could not answer, is also true. But I am very sorry, Sir, that you should give the slightest countenance to the notion, that ridicule is a proper weapon on a serious subject. The inquiry, whether the Bible is the word of GOD, and whether the commission which CHRIST gave to his Apostles has been handed down by *vicarious* ordination to the present time, are certainly too serious to be ridiculed. When, therefore, I read an author who uses ridicule, I take it for granted that he has no solid arguments to offer; that the truth is too powerful for him, and that, therefore, he has recourse to distortion, which divests truth of its native beauty and simplicity, and gives it a form calculated to produce laughter mingled with contempt. Such a weapon will never be used by a serious Christian against any thing that is not in itself ridiculous; and surely what can be supported by sound reasoning, and by the word of GOD, can never be deserving of that character.

You conclude, Sir, as you began, with undesigningly misrepresenting some of the writers of our Church. You say, Chillingworth, Barrow, and Hoadly, 'have taken the negative side' of this question. If you had given a reference to that part of Chillingworth's writings which contain what you ascribe to him,

I should, of course, consult the place; but as you have not, I shall not run over his works in quest of what I am fully satisfied can never be found. I am perfectly weary of the trouble you have given me in this respect; and I am sure that no one will blame me for declining it on this occasion.—As to Barrow, I have shown, in my eleventh letter, by several quotations from him, that he maintains the doctrine of *succession*, as much as any man; and also that Hoadly maintains it in his book on the *Reasonableness of Conformity;* admitting, however, in a case of *necessity*, a departure from the line of succession. It is true, that in the latter part of his life, he adopted a principle that totally annihilated the Church of CHRIST. He supposed that CHRIST left no authority whatever in his Church; and, consequently, that *succession* is wholly needless. This produced the famous Bangorian controversy; in which Hoadly was assailed by the ablest writers of the Church, and particularly by Mr. Law, who gave him one of the most complete defeats that perhaps any man ever received. If you had Hoadly in view when he thus laid the "axe at the root of the tree," you are extremely welcome to him; but if you had reference to the book I have mentioned, you are greatly mistaken, as I have shown, page 145.

To this doctrine of unbroken succession, so strenuously maintained by all the ancients, and by the Church to which you belong, you evidently are not well affected. However, you will take for granted, 'that it is the only channel through which ministers of the present day can have the apostolic commission transmitted to them. Supposing this to be the case, nothing is more easy than to show, on Presbyterian principles, that the succession in *our* Church is as distinct, regular, and unbroken, as that of the episcopal Church.'

Were, Sir, this to be admitted, it can do you no good, unless you can prove presbytery to be the original constitution of the Church. Then the same arguments that I have used in support of episcopal succession, would apply to presbyterian; because, undoubtedly, CHRIST would take care of his own institution. But even in this case, whatever may be said of your Church, it is very certain, that several sects make no pretensions to succession, and, therefore, no care is taken to preserve it. This is the case with the Baptists, Independents, and others. In New England, there have been numerous instances of lay-ordinations; consequently, all derived from that source have no pretensions to succession. In France, for several years, lay ordination was practised and defended; but at length it was given up, as unscriptural and unwarrantable. The ministry of the Huguenots, then, cannot flow in an unbroken line. Calvin himself was not ordained, if Beza, his friend and colleague, knew any thing about the matter; and yet, no doubt, he ordained numbers. Is it probable, then, that the Church of Geneva has a succession? With respect to the Church of Scotland, I do not know that lay ordination was ever admitted by her; but it is very certain, that

for several years there was no such thing as imposition of hands. This, I think, all sober Christians will acknowledge to be very unscriptural, to say the least. The English presbyterian succession is, I believe, the most pure, as the first *non-conformists* were ordained by English Bishops.

But admitting that Presbyterian orders are every where free from suspicion, yet there is one obvious objection to them. When the reformation began, all the Churches in Europe were episcopal, and all the Presbyters then existing, had been ordained by Bishops. But no Bishop ever gave a Presbyter authority to ordain. The utmost authority given is, *to preach the word*, and to administer the sacraments. Whence then did those Presbyters who first ordained, derive that power? The office of a Presbyter is a gift *mediately* from CHRIST. But a person who receives a gift, receives just as much as the gift implies, and not a tittle more. But the power of ordaining was not a part of the gift to the Presbyters at the reformation. How then could they ordain others when they were not empowered so to do? There appears to be a difficulty here: How is it to be removed?

There is one expression, which, before I close, it may be proper to notice. You say, at the bottom of page 346, that *imparity* is a *Popish* doctrine. Pray, Sir, do you know what *Popery* is? I am perfectly cool, I do assure you. I will not give way to any indignant expressions; but I do insist upon it, that you are totally ignorant of the meaning of the word Popery, or you would not assert that *imparity* sprang out of the Church of Rome; for this must be your meaning, or you mean nothing to the purpose. Besides, this assertion is inconsistent with your own concession. I have proved that the Papal supremacy did not exist till the seventh century, and you allow that imparity prevailed centuries before that period. Can a thing spring from a source that did not exist till ages after?

Again: How happened it, Sir, that when the assertion under consideration dropped from your pen, you did not recollect Jerome's account of the Church of Alexandria? He assures us, that *imparity* existed in that Church from its foundation. Poor Jerome! How you do treat him! When he speaks obscurely, he is a great man—a man of great learning and research; but when he speaks *plainly* and *positively* in favour of episcopacy, then he is treated with as little respect as you treat the office of a Bishop.

Further: If *imparity* originated in the Church of Rome, there must be some evidence of it. Now, Sir, I will put the matter to a fair trial. I call upon you to produce the evidence, that episcopal imparity *began* in the Church of Rome. You have committed yourself, Sir; you must, therefore, either prove, or renounce your assertion.

Lastly. Weigh impartially the evidence exhibited in these letters, for the apostolic origin of episcopacy, and then lay your hand upon your heart, and in the fear of GOD say, whether you

do not think that you have most grossly libelled the whole Episcopal Church throughout the world, in ascribing episcopacy to corruption, and to a love of power and domination, from which Papal supremacy originated. Something explicit upon this point will be expected from you, in the course of the controversy. Silence will not be taken as an acknowledgment of error, but as a pertinacious adherence to it; and we shall not be satisfied unless you either say, 'I have erred,' or maintain your assertion with learning and argument.

You next sum up all that you have said in favour of *parity*, and against *episcopacy*, in the following triumphant manner.

'You have seen,' (addressing your 'Christian brethren') 'that the Scriptures contain but *one commission* for the gospel ministry.'—Yes, Sir, and we have seen that *the one commission* was conveyed in all its plenitude to that order of men, who, according to Scripture and antiquity, took the place of the Apostles; and to the Presbyters, but *a part* of the authority implied in that commission. This was proved in a particular manner by the authority given to Timothy and Titus, and by the testimony of antiquity.

'You have seen—that Bishop and Presbyter are uniformly used in the New Testament as convertible titles for the same office; that the same *character* and *power* are also, in the sacred writings, ascribed interchangeably to Bishops and Presbyters, thus plainly establishing their identity of *order* as well as of *name*.'—We have seen that the community of names is a gross and insufferable fallacy—that it does not follow, because the second order had a double title, that there were none who presided over them. We have seen that the Apostles governed those Presbyters and Bishops, and that they devolved their supremacy on a number of persons, to whom the care of Churches was committed; and that this order had one of the titles, at first given to Presbyters, appropriated to them. That title is Bishop, according to all the fathers, who are positive and decisive upon this point.

'You have seen—that the Christian Church was organized by the Apostles, after the model of the Jewish *Synagogue*, which was undoubtedly *presbyterian* in its form.'—We have seen that the *Synagogue* and the *Church* are essentially different in their origin, their constitution, and their ministry; that the former was of human appointment, that the latter is of divine; that the ministry of the former possessed no character of sacredness, no commission from God, but from the people; that there was no principle of unity in the Synagogue, no sacraments, no marks of a Church; in short, that it was *no Church*; and, therefore, that the Synagogue was not the model of the Christian Church.

'You have seen that all the arguments which our Episcopal brethren profess to derive from Scripture in favour of their system, are perfectly nugatory, and do not yield it the least

solid support.' We have seen that the apostolic commission is to be continued in the Church to the end of the world; that it was devolved upon Barnabas, Epaphroditus, Timothy, Titus and the Apocalyptic Angels; and that these had been successors, who were in power and rank superior to the Presbyters. This, we have observed, is a decisive proof that the apostolic pre-eminence is to be continued in the Church forever.

'You have seen that the *fathers* of the first two centuries are so far from furnishing a single passage which gives even a semblance of aid to the episcopal cause, that, like the Scriptures, they every where speak a language wholly inconsistent with it, and favourable only to the doctrine of ministerial parity.'—We have seen that this is a misrepresentation gross to excess. We have seen the testimonies of Clemens of Alexandria, of Tertullian, of Irenæus, of Dionysius, of Hegesippus, and of Ignatius, in the second century; and we have seen that the evidence is so clear and strong, that Blondel, Salmasius, Chamier, and a number of others, have given up the point after some time in that century. We have also seen, that the third century affords a large collection of testimonies to episcopal government as existing not only in that age, but also in the two preceding ages: and that the fourth century bears the same testimony. And the conclusion from all this is, that we have clear, decisive evidence for the apostolic institution of episcopacy.

'You have seen that the great body of the *reformers*, and other *witnesses for the truth*, of different ages and nations, with one voice maintained the same doctrine, as taught in Scripture, and in the primitive Church; and that even the most conspicuous *English* reformers, while they assisted in organizing an episcopal establishment in their own country, defended it on the ground of *human expediency*, and the *will of the magistrate*, rather than that of *divine right*.'—We have seen that all this is at utter variance with the true state of the case; that all the reformers of the Church of England placed episcopacy on the ground, not of *human expediency*, but of *apostolic institution*. We have seen this to be the fact from the most authentic documents; from the 'Questions and answers,' from the 'Preface to the Ordinal,' from the 'Ordination Offices,' from Cranmer's Catechism, and Sermon *on the Keys*, and from the testimonies of Collier and Burnet. We have also seen that those distinguished *witnesses for the truth*, the Waldenses, and the Protestants of Bohemia, were Episcopalians upon the ground of apostolic institution, and that they preserved this primitive government under all their sufferings, and in defiance of all the power of their enemies. We have seen all this proved by the testimony of historians the most respectable, and the most worthy of credit.

'You have seen that the Church of England, and those Churches which have immediately descended from her, *stand absolutely alone, in the whole Protestant world*, in representing

Bishops as an order of clergy superior to *Presbyters;* all other Protestants, even those who adopt a sort of prelacy, having pronounced it to be a mere *human invention*,'—We have seen that this is in direct opposition to matter of fact. We have seen that not only the Churches of England and Ireland, and the Episcopal Church in Scotland and in this country, place episcopacy upon the ground of apostolic institution, but that also the Moravian Church, and the Churches of Sweden and Denmark place it upon the same ground. We have also seen that nearly the whole world is Episcopal; and that no proof can be brought that there ever existed a single Presbyterian Church from the apostolic age to the reformation. And to this may be added, the late information given by Dr. Buchanan, that the Syrian church in the East-Indies is Episcopal, and has been so from its foundation.

'You have seen some of the most learned and pious Bishops and other divines of the Church of England, utterly disclaiming the divine right of diocesan episcopacy; and declaring that they considered a great majority of the clergy of that Church, in later as well as earlier times, as of the same opinion with themselves.'—We have seen that nearly all the divines whom you quote, as conceding that episcopacy is a human institution, do, in the most express manner, maintain that it is an apostolic institution; and that this is the opinion of the great body of Episcopal divines is beyond all doubt.

'Finally: You have seen that the *gradual introduction* of Prelacy, within the first four centuries, was not only *practicable*, but one of the most *natural* and *probable* of all events; and that the most competent judges, and profound inquirers into early history, have pronounced that it actually took place.' We have seen that there was no change, either *gradual*, or otherwise, in the government of the Church; that not a single writer of antiquity gives any hint of a change; but, on the contrary, that they all declare episcopacy was established by the Apostles. We have also seen, that, from the afflicted state of the Church during the first three centuries, from the nature of the human mind which cannot act without a motive, and from the impossibility of assigning any motive for an attempt to alter the government of the Church, no such change could have taken place. We have further seen, that if men could have been found weak and wicked enough to make the attempt, still that it was impracticable to succeed without the aid of the civil arm; and *that*, we know, for three centuries, was exerted, not to give distinction to the Church of CHRIST, but to leave not a trace of it upon the face of the earth. And, lastly, we have seen, that the opponents of episcopacy, confidently as they talk about a change, cannot so much as name the century in which the change took place, but that they are at utter variance upon this point among themselves. From all these considerations we conclude, that no change took place; but that episcopacy is an *apostolic and divine institution*.

To conclude: We have seen that your book, from the beginning to the end, is almost one continued chain of misstatements of facts, misrepresentation of authors—bold, unfounded, assertions—false reasoning—palpable contradictions of your own assertions, of the principles of your own Church, of the writers of your own denomination, and what is worse than all, of the holy Scriptures. All this must have been very evident to every attentive and impartial reader. But still it may be well again to bring to view these particulars, that every one who wishes to see the truth, may be satisfied that I am perfectly correct in my assertion. The references will be to my own Letters, in which the proofs of your errors are exhibited.

MISSTATEMENTS OF FACTS.

1. You say, that Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, attended the council of Antioch, in the year 260. Eusebius says that he was not there; being detained by age and infirmities. Letter IV. p. 40.[a]

2. You say that Dalmatius, who assisted at the general council of Ephesus, in the fifth century, told the Emperor, that 'there were six thousand Bishops in the council.' You quote no ancient author for this, for a very good reason—you could not. Indeed, it carries absurdity upon the face of it; and it contradicts Du Pin, and Cave, who say that about two hundred attended. Letter IV. p. 42, 43.[b]

3. You say, that St. Patrick planted congregational episcopacy in Ireland. This is absolutely incredible. A Bishop, acting under the Pope of Rome, planting *parity* in the Churches he founded, is too ridiculous. Mosheim gives such an account of the matter as every man would expect—Patrick planted episcopacy. Dr. Maurice gives the same account. Letter IV. p. 44, 45.[c]

4. You assert, that the Bishop lived in the same house with his Presbyters. This also is too ridiculous for any man to believe. It is a gross misstatement, as will be seen Letter IV. p. 45, 46.

5. You say, that 'Irenæus was Bishop of Lyons, when he was sent with a letter from that Church to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome.' This contradicts Eusebius, who says that Irenæus was but a Presbyter at that time, and that he was not Bishop of Lyons till after his return. Letter VII. p. 82.

6. You assert, that the business of the 'Questions and Answers' occurred in the year 1548; whereas, it is evident from Burnet, that it took place in the year 1540, before the death of Henry the Eighth, when the reformation had made but little progress. Letter XIV. p. 190, 191.

7. You inform us, 'that several foreign divines, who had only

a [Allowed and altered by Dr. M. in his 2d edit.]
b [Omitted in Dr. M.'s 2d edition.] c Ibid.

Presbyterian ordination, were allowed to hold benefices in England.' Of this you give no proof; nor do you so much as name the foreign divines. I have, however, supplied the omission. They were P. Martyr, M. Bucer, and P. Fagius. The two last were never admitted to any ecclesiastical benefice, but only to academical prefermeats. The first held a benefice, but he was previously ordained by a Bishop. Letter XV. p. 205.

8. You assert, that Bancroft was the first man who preached up the divine right of episcopacy.' This is contrary to fact. Cranmer preached it long before Bancroft. So did the other reformers, and some time after them, Whitgift preached it. The Ordination Offices also maintain that doctrine. Letter XV. p. 212, 213.

9. You say, that the constitution of the Church of Scotland was founded on the presbyterian plan. On the contrary, I have proved from the most respectable historians, that the reformers of that Church adopted the *Lutheran* plan of *Superintendents;* and that *parity* of ministers was not admitted till twenty years after the reformation. Letter XV. p. 214, 215.

10. You maintain, that the Swedish Bishops are no more than *Superintendents*. This is in direct contradiction to Mosheim. Letter XVI. p. 219.

11. You adduce the Waldenses as witnesses to ministerial parity; and assert, 'that their ecclesiastical organization was Presbyterian in its form.' This has been proved to be a gross error. The proofs are taken from Mosheim, Allix, Commenius, and the Bohemian Church, in its preface to the book called *Ratio Disciplinæ*, &c. Letter XVI. p. 219.

12. You misstate the times when infant communion, the power of Metropolitans, and the Papacy, took their rise. Letter XVIII. p. 253, 257.

13. You assert, that the people elected their Bishops in the first three centuries. This is certainly contrary to fact, during by far the greater part of that period. Letter XVIII. p. 257, 258, 259. These are but a part of your misstatements.

MISREPRESENTATION OF AUTHORS.

1. You have misrepresented Jerome. Several pointed, decisive testimonies have been adduced from this author. When he is not obscure, no writer of antiquity bears stronger testimony to the apostolic institution of episcopacy. Letter I. *passim*.

2. Hilary is misrepresented. He says, "In the absence of the Bishop, the Presbyters *consignant*;" or, more probably, *consecrant—consecrate* the Eucharist. At any rate, it does not signify *ordain*. Letter II. p. 18, 19.

3. You grossly misrepresent Chrysostom and Theodoret. They most pointedly and unequivocally assert the apostolic institution of episcopacy. Letter II. p. 20, 21.

4. You give an unfair view of the testimonies of Primasius

and Sedulius. They do no more than assert the community of names; to which Episcopalians readily subscribe. Letter II. p. 21.

5. Your view of the condemnation of Aerius, is utterly inconsistent with the accounts of Epiphanius and St. Augustine. Letter II. p. 22, 23.

6. You misrepresent the address of Cyprian's 39th epistle. To make it comport with your order of Ruling Elders, you insert the word *Elders*, which is not in the address. Letter III. p. 34.[d]

7. You make Numidicus a Ruling Elder, when Cyprian says, he joined him with his clergy, that their number might be recruited with such illustrious Priests—*gloriosis sacerdotibus*. Letter III. p. 34.[d]

8. You have villfied the *Apostolic Canons*, which Bishop Beveridge has amply proved to be the decrees of Synods in the second and third centuries, collected at different times, and by different persons. Blondel acknowledges that they are as ancient as the third century. Letter V. p. 56, 57, 58.

9. You have misrepresented Dodwell in what he says with respect to Peter. Letter V. p. 63, 64.

10. You have most egregiously misrepresented Cyprian in the few quotations you give us from his writings, and particularly when you say, that he calls Presbyters his *colleagues*. He never once calls them so. Letter V. p. 66.

11. You have given a ridiculous account of Tertullian's High Priest, who, you suppose, 'might have been the *standing Moderator* of the Presbytery.' Letter VI. p. 70.

12. You misrepresent Clemens Alexandrinus, who distinctly enumerates the orders of Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon; and asserts that there are precepts in the holy Scriptures relating to each of them; consequently, that they are of divine institution. Letter VI. p. 74—77.

13. You have given an unfair view of the testimonies of Irenæus. Nothing can be more explicit than his assertion, that Bishops succeeded to the pre-eminence of the Apostles. Letter VII. p. 79, 80, 81.

14. You have, even to a degree of ridiculousness, misrepresented Ignatius. His Epistles are such a powerful support to the episcopal cause, that the most learned advocates of presbytery have never attempted to bend them in favour of their hypothesis. Letter VII. p. 87—90.

15. You have entirely perverted the meaning of Origen and Hilary, in order to make them give a favourable look towards ruling Elders. They do not give that order the slightest support. Letter VIII. p. 99, 100.

16. You have given an explication of the various texts of Scripture adduced in the course of the discussion, which is at

d [The reference to this epistle of Cyprian is omitted in Dr. M.'s 2d edition.]

utter variance with the explication of the fathers. As the point in dispute is a matter of fact, they must be infinitely better judges of the evidence of that fact than any moderns can be. Letters IX. X.

17. You have greatly misrepresented Barrow, Bodwell, and Hoadly, on the subject of *uninterrupted succession*. The latter is said to be misrepresented on the supposition that you had reference to his *Reasonableness of Conformity*. Letter XI. p. 143, 144, 145, 146.

18. You have totally misrepresented the nature of the *Jewish Synagogue;* and, in consequence, have erroneously made it the exemplar of the Christian Church. Letter XII.

19. You have given an erroneous view of the *Institution of a Christian Man*. It maintains a *parity* of Bishops in opposition to papal supremacy; but not a *parity* among all the ministers of the Gospel. Letter XIV. p. 186.

20. You have misrepresented the principles upon which Cranmer took out a new commission for the exercise of his office. He did not thereby acknowledge any spiritual authority in the King; as is evident from Burnet's history of the reformation. Letter XIV. p. 192, 193.

21. You have given a very false representation of the *old Ordinal*. Letter XIV. p. 194—199.

22. You have grossly misrepresented the canons of Elfric. They bear a direct testimony to episcopal pre-eminence. Letter XVI. p. 230, 231.

23. You have ascribed to Archbishop Anselme, a work which Cave says is spurious. Your quotation, therefore, is good for nothing. Letter XVI. p. 231.

24. You have given a very improper view of Whitgift, Bilson, Jewel, Stillingfleet, Burnet, and several other writers. Letter XVII. *passim*.

25. Your view of the *rise and progress of episcopacy* is nothing but misrepresentation from first to last. It is in direct contradiction to the nature of the human mind, to notorious facts, to the circumstances of the Church, and to the testimony of all antiquity. Letters XVIII. XIX. *passim*.

These, Sir, are but a part of your misrepresentations. They are, however, enough for a specimen.

UNFOUNDED ASSERTIONS.

1. All your misstatements of facts, and misrepresentations of authors, are so many unfounded assertions. To these I will add a few more.

2. You assert that Jerome informs us, that the Presbyters ordained their Bishop at Alexandria. This is without foundation. He says no such thing. Letter I. p. 11.

3. Your caution to your readers to beware of the writers of

the third century, cannot be justified by facts. None of your observations can be supported. Letter III. p. 30—32.

4. You assert, that there was but one congregation at Carthage. This has been proved to be groundless. Letter III. p. 32—34.

5. You say, 'That the Church of which a Bishop had the care is represented in the Epistles of Ignatius, as coming together to one place.' This is without foundation. Letter VII. p. 90—92.

6. You say, that 'the fathers are not unanimous, but contradict one another.' This is totally unfounded. They all make episcopacy an apostolical institution. Letter VIII. p. 107, 108.

7. You assert, that Timothy and Titus acted as Evangelists at Ephesus and Crete. This assertion is unfounded. It has been shown that they could not possibly have acted as Evangelists, if we regard the etymology of the word; for the Gospel had been preached in both places before Timothy and Titus were sent to preside over them. Letter IX. p. 123, 124.

8. You assert, that the reformers of the Church of England were Presbyterians in principle. This has been proved by abundant evidence to have no foundation. Letter XIV. *passim.*

9. Your assertion that ignorance prevailed in the second and third centuries, is groundless. It was very far from being the case. Letter XVIII. p. 265, 266.

10. I have noticed in this letter your unfounded assertion that *imparity* is a Popish doctrine, p. 255.

11. The summary in your last letter of the evidence contained in your book, is nothing but a string of unfounded assertions. *Not one* of the *nine* particulars you enumerate has been proved, p. 320.

This, I believe, will be a sufficient sample of unfounded assertions.

CONTRADICTIONS.

1. You contradict yourself. Letter XIII. p. 184.
2. You contradict your own *Confession of Faith*, p. 184.
3. You contradict the Westminster divines, Dr. Mason, and Mr. M'Leod. p. 185.
4. You contradict the Scriptures. p. 183.

OMISSIONS.

You have omitted several direct, positive testimonies from Jerome, several from Hilary, two from Isidore, two from Optatus, one from Athanasius, one from Theodoret, two from Epiphanius, several from Chrysostom, and several from Eusebius; besides the testimonies of hundreds of Bishops met in General and Provincial Councils in the fourth century.

2. In the third century you have omitted the testimonies of Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, of Cornelius, and the Presbyters of the Church of Rome, of Origen, and a volume of testimonies from Cyprian, and the Bishops of Africa; besides the testimony given to episcopacy by the *Apostolical Canons*.

3. In the second century, you have omitted the testimony of Dionysius, of Polycrates, and of Hegesippus.

4. In the first century you have omitted to notice the Church of Jerusalem, which, from the Scripture account, and the testimonies of the ancients, affords episcopacy strong support.

I have now, Sir, said all that I think necessary to be said upon the question relating to the government of CHRIST's Church. The subject will admit of a much ampler discussion, and it would be an easy matter to fill another volume with testimonies, and reasonings upon them; but I think enough has been done to convince those who will weigh with candour and impartiality the evidence adduced, that episcopacy is an apostolic and divine institution.

Although my patience has been severely tried by your manner of quoting authors, by several provoking hints and expressions, and by a management strikingly partial and unfair; yet I hope that I have not been hurried into any transgression of decorum. I certainly wished, while I spoke plainly, to avoid every thing that would unnecessarily hurt your feelings. When error is exposed, it must unavoidably have an unpleasant effect upon the mind of him who has fallen into it; but if, when exposing error, the manner of doing it be so harsh as to irritate the feelings of an opponent, it is censurable. That I am faulty in this respect, I am not conscious; but if you, Sir, perceive any thing of the kind, point it out, and it shall be immediately retracted. Or if I have done you injustice in any respect whatever, you have but to name it, and if it be really injustice, I will readily acknowledge it to be so. To err degrades no man; but obstinately to persevere in error, is really disgraceful.

The series of Letters which I have now addressed to you, can certainly have no claim to freedom from defects. The circumstances under which they have been written, do not, I believe, often attend one who gives his thoughts to the public, upon such a variety of points as have occurred in this discussion. By far the greater part of these Letters have been written in the midst of my family, without having had recourse, in a single instance, to solitary retirement, and but one of the whole series has been transcribed. My collegiate duties, too, have caused daily and almost hourly interruptions. A candid mind will not, therefore, be disposed to find fault with slight inaccuracies; but will place them among those things *quas incuria fudit*, [which have dropped for want of care.]

I shall now, Sir, take my leave of you, at least for a time. Whether I shall *ever* address you again, will entirely depend upon yourself. Should you be disposed for any further discussion of the subject, you will not find me unwilling to meet your wishes. When the Church to which I have the happiness to

belong is attacked, irksome as writing is at my time of life, I feel no backwardness to exert the little ability I possess, in her defence; and it affords me no little pleasure to think, that I am at the same time defending the cause of almost every Christian Church upon earth.

I am, Reverend Sir, with esteem and respect,

Your obedient and humble servant,

JOHN BOWDEN.

Columbia College, July 15, 1808.

THE END.